# The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

## SILENT SPRING IN PRAGUE

If, as we can now dare to think, the cold war is in its terminal phase, then the citizens of the two opposing blocs must be able to meet one another with the same ease and affability that was evinced by Reagan and Gorbachev. Above all, those who are concerned with nuclear war and with human rights must abolish the cold war mentality, which places these two great questions in a false antithesis.

This was precisely the agenda put forward by the Czechoslovak unofficial opposition, Charter 77, when it invited activists from East, West and nonaligned countries to attend a seminar in Prague beginning June 17. The invitation spoke of "overcoming the influence of militaristic and police ideologies and overcoming the machines and ideologies that propagate intolerance and hate." Representatives came from groups in Hungary and Poland as well as from Britain, Italy, West Germany, the Netherlands, India and Puerto Rico. Among the visitors from the United States were *The Nation*'s Jefferson Morley and Christopher Hitchens.

Similar meetings of like-minded détenteniks have taken place in Budapest, in Warsaw and even in Moscow. But the Czechoslovak security police decided to place the interests of "militaristic and police ideologies" above the Helsinki Final Act, to which the Czechoslovak government is a solemn signatory. The meeting was repeatedly broken up, with the foreigners brusquely held and swiftly deported while their hosts paid for their courage with arbitrary detention.

The cops may know no better, but on the streets and in the squares of Prague, as the twentieth anniversary of the Brezhnev invasion approaches, there is pride in having anticipated *glasnost* by two decades. Meanwhile, contact across frontiers will go on, and *The Nation* will be a part of it.


**EXCHANGE: CONTRA NEWS FIT TO PRINT**
James LeMoyne
Alexander Cockburn

**IS THERE REALLY A SECRET TEAM?**
David Corn

**ANTHROPOLOGY AS FICTION**
Arnold Krupat

**LANGUAGE POETS**
Hank Lazer

**LITERARY SEX WARS**
Julie Abraham

**BEAN COUNTRY**
Art Winslow


BICENTENNIAL BUST

## CELEBRATING (YAWN) THE CONSTITUTION

JAMIE KITMAN AND RUTH YODAIKEN

Don't scold yourself too severely if you've already forgotten the Federal government's four-year celebration of the bicentennial of the ratification of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, which began last year. It appears the high-priced national Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution has, too.

Since its creation by Congress in 1983, the commission has been unusually ineffective. Crippled by chair and former Chief Justice Warren Burger's despotism and its members' timidity, the body has been slow in spending much of the heady $46 million it has been allocated to date, and has failed to achieve even the modest goals it once set for itself. Far from the "history and civics lesson for us all" promised by Burger, the rightward-tilting commission and its lavish 104-member staff have offered little more than a limited-enrollment refresher course in ancestor worship. And, despite a resolution stating its intent to remain strictly above the contemporary political fray, the commission has lent its good name to several modern and highly partisan exercises in racism, religious intolerance and homophobia.

This is how, one suspects, the Reagan Administration, which named a majority of the commission's members, would have it. Notwithstanding its professed support for the celebration, the White House has served the bicentennial as miserably as it has served the Constitution. The story of the commission and of the many politically tinged grants made by the

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# EXCHANGE.

## LEMOYNE ON COCKBURN

*San Salvador*

May I trouble you to print this reply to Alexander Cockburn's column ["Beat the Devil"] on January 30 of this year about my report of a *contra* rebel attack on the towns of Siuna, Bonanza and La Rosita in Nicaragua? I am sorry to be so late in answering, but it takes a while for *The Nation* to filter down to Central America.

The central issue for Cockburn appears to be whether the *contras* did or did not occupy the town of Siuna in their attack at the end of last December. I reported that they did. Cockburn relies on the account of someone named Mark Cook to argue that the rebels did not occupy Siuna and that therefore my reporting was wrong.

Cockburn wrote that there was no material evidence that the *contras* had occupied the town. In fact there was such evidence.

The Sandinistas bombed Siuna from the air, as I reported. The bombs lay in their craters in the center of town and at the airport, where several journalists saw them. The chief Sandinista army officer in the town, Maj. Ramon Sosa, told reporters at a press conference that the Sandinistas had bombed the town. Why would the Sandinistas bomb the center of a town—unless it was to drive rebels out of it? That material evidence was backed up by the accounts of fourteen villagers, local officials and Sandinista soldiers whom I interviewed separately on a walk through Siuna. Most of these interviews were carried out with Oswaldo Bonilla, a U.P.I. reporter based in Managua who tape-recorded the conversations. Perhaps he could make his tape available to Cockburn.

Bonilla also reported that the *contras* had taken Siuna. Most other reporters who visited the town with me said they reached the same conclusion. Yet Cockburn asserts that "many of the journalists who were there at the same time" did not conclude that the rebels had taken Siuna. How could Cockburn know; did he talk to them?

The head of the local hospital in Siuna, Dr. Klaus Helber, is an international volunteer who described himself as sympathetic to the Sandinistas. He has worked in Siuna for two years, he said. Dr. Helber said the *contras* held the town for eight hours, in which they walked around talking to villagers, bought Coca-Colas, visited his hospital and gave political talks.

I quoted Dr. Helber's account. Why would he lie about the rebels taking the town? Several other villagers gave similar accounts. Why would they lie?

It is true that the *contras* did not attack obvious targets in Siuna, in particular the army headquarters. I think the explanation is that the rebels realized that attacking the army base, which is located on a well-defended hill, would be far too costly.

Cockburn says reporters could have visited all three towns attacked by the *contras*. That is not true, as several reporters on the Sandinista-guided tour I made, such as Chris Vail of Reuters and Bonilla of U.P.I., can attest.

Despite promising to take us to Bonanza and La Rosita, the Sandinistas let us visit only Siuna and let us stay for only about two hours. The Sandinistas politely deflected repeated requests to go to Bonanza, which the *contras* reportedly held for two days, during which they destroyed most military installations in the area.

Cockburn wrote that other reporters were taken to Siuna before the group with which I traveled. That is technically true—but he might have told your readers that the "other reporters" worked for the government and Sandinista party radio, newspapers and television. I entered Siuna with the first nongovernment reporters the Sandinistas permitted into the area.

Cockburn wrote, quoting his single source, Cook, that the level of support for the *contras* in the area of Siuna appears to be declining. How could he or Cook have enough evidence to make that statement, unless they have spent a period of time in the area?

In fact, Siuna appears to be like most Nicaraguan country towns—a polarized and suspicious place where some people sympathize with the rebels and some sympathize with the government. What is certain is that the *contras* were able to move a force of probably 1,000 men into the area without being detected by the Sandinistas. Several villagers and Sandinista soldiers said this indicated to them that the rebels had enough support among peasants to evade Sandinista units and spies in order to launch a surprise attack. That does not seem an illogical deduction.

There are hundreds of peasants in Nicaraguan refugee camps inside Honduras who have fled the Siuna area. I interviewed several of them last year and wrote an article based on their accounts. The refugees said they fled because they suffered constant harassment from Sandinista state security agents searching for *contra* supporters. Last year the *contras* formed a rebel unit called "Siuna"—it is made up entirely of men from the Siuna area.

Cockburn disagreed strongly with my reported judgment that the *contras*' attack on Siuna, Bonanza and La Rosita was their "largest and most successful military operation of the war." Does Cockburn know of a previous rebel attack that was either larger or more militarily destructive?

In the raid I reported, the rebels launched simultaneous attacks on army positions in three towns. They occupied two of the towns, destroyed an arms warehouse, a radar site, militia and police offices and two bridges—while ambushing army reinforcements and inflicting probably 200 casualties on the Sandinista military. I can't recall when the *contras* have done that before.

Cockburn suggested that by reporting the rebel attack, I aided the Reagan Administration's policy toward Nicaragua. Would *not* reporting the attack have better served my readers? Or should I have lied and said it was just a "propagandistic" raid, rather than pointed out that it was the biggest and most militarily successful attack by the rebels?

Finally, Cockburn wrote that I mentioned the massive civilian casualties inflicted by the *contras* in their attack on the towns only as an afterthought, at the very end of my article. Once again, that is not true, and Cockburn, who presumably read my article, must know it's not true.

I made a special point in the third paragraph of my article to say: "The overall military effectiveness of the rebel attack was seriously marred by the number of civilian casualties. As many as 19 civilians appear to have been killed and more than 100 wounded in the three towns." In the sixth paragraph, I wrote of helicopters ferrying out the wounded, "a great many of them civilians."

Cockburn began his editorial by depicting the suffering of 6-year-old Kenia Rodríguez, whose feet were blown off by a rebel mortar in Siuna. He neglected to say that I specifically quoted Miss Rodríguez and described her terrible wounds in my article, pointing out that the rebels wounded "several women and young children." I did this at the end of my report in order to make the point that "the rebels appear to have won few friends in the towns by causing so many civilian casualties."

Cockburn wrote that some civilians were purposely shot by the *contras*. No one I interviewed said this, but I was not able to go everywhere in Siuna and it is possible that the rebels did purposely shoot people. But with very little time for reporting, I opted to leave the Sandinista-guided tour of the town and interview people on my own with Bonilla of U.P.I.

I relied on the judgment of the town doctor, Helber, who operated on all the civilians wounded in Siuna and who told me and Bonilla that no patient accused the rebels of purposely wounding them.

Dr. Helber said almost all wounds appeared to be shrapnel from poorly controlled mortar fire. That is a common occurrence in guerrilla attacks, as could be seen in February in El Salvador, when leftist rebels killed six civilians in the town of Usulután with a misplaced mortar round during an attack on an army barracks.

To conclude: I think the evidence indicates that the rebels carried out their most militari-

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# EDITORIALS.

## The Exploiters

The charges against the attackers of Tawana Brawley, a Wappingers Falls, New York, teen-ager who claims she was abducted and abused by as many as six white men last November, have now turned into a case against her lawyers and advisers. It may well be that the teen-ager's stories of rape and racial abuse were grossly misrepresented to support the personal or political ambitions of her defense team. Already, a former aide to the Rev. Al Sharpton has testified that the Brawley story was a "pack of lies," and last week another character came forward to claim that he had bugged Sharpton's home and lawyer C. Vernon Mason's home and office at Sharpton's behest.

But however bad the case, legally and ethically, it must not be used to deny the authentic anger of blacks and other minorities at discrimination in the justice system, nor to invalidate the strategy of selective noncooperation that proved so effective in the Howard Beach, Queens, case.

Crimes against blacks (especially when whites or the police are suspects) go uninvestigated or underprosecuted. In New York State's fifty-nine counties there are no black or Hispanic district attorneys, and only a handful of black judges with the background and authority to deal sympathetically with the black community. The laws themselves are written to penalize perpetrators of "black" crimes more severely than those who commit more genteel "white" crimes.

Mason and Alton Maddox made judicial history in the Howard Beach incident by refusing to cooperate with the legal establishment until a special prosecutor was appointed.

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Noncooperation has also been used in challenging the right of grand juries to compel testimony from witnesses in political cases, and civil rights lawyers in the South during the 1960s used it successfully to defy racist authorities in many locales. The strategy derives from nonviolent political protest, and it deserves a permanent place in the arsenal available to advocates for the powerless.

Sharpton et al. have caused dissension in the black community, which has only recently recovered from the defeatism and reaction of the Reagan era. Worst of all, they have victimized Tawana Brawley one more time.

# Nazi Assets

A report issued June 16 by the Justice Department's Nazi-hunting unit, the Office of Special Investigations (O.S.I.), reveals thirteen more cases of Nazis who were hired and protected by U.S. Army Intelligence during the years following World War II. At least eight of the recruits were war criminals by the strictest definition of the term, including a veteran of an S.S. Einsatzkommando mass-murder squad and a man identified only as the "Chief of the Security Service in a Nazi puppet state."

After decades of equivocation, denial and lies, the cover stories about the U.S. intelligence community's use of Nazis deserve attention not just as another Central Intelligence Agency scandal but because they provide new insights into the twisted history of postwar anti-Communism.

The latest O.S.I. report is a valuable contribution to the growing body of information concerning these operations. Started in 1984 as a study of Robert Jan Verbelen, a Belgian neofascist and twice-convicted Nazi war criminal who served U.S. Army Intelligence for at least a decade during the 1940s and 1950s, O.S.I.'s investigation led inexorably to not just one or two but a dozen other Nazis who had been involved in Verbelen's network alone.

As Christopher Simpson reminds us in his new book, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and its Effects on the Cold War*, the enlistment of thousands of former Nazis such as Verbelen has had a subtle impact on U.S.-Soviet relations, on C.I.A. clandestine operations and even, to a limited degree, on domestic political affairs. Intelligence officials such as Allen Dulles and William Casey pioneered U.S. "political warfare" tactics, employing Nazis in covert operations in Eastern Europe—tactics that were later used in Vietnam, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Although many of the U.S. intelligence operatives involved knew early on that the data they were collecting from former Nazis and their collaborators was ideologically distorted and misleading, the Nazi utilization programs went ahead. The aim was not the collection of facts but of anti-Communist factoids useful for propaganda and blackmail. Verbelen and his colleagues were reasonably efficient purveyors of such goods, and they were willing to work cheaply—in return for protection. It turns out that the price, in terms of lost American honor, was terribly high.

**NOTE**

With this issue *The Nation* begins its biweekly summer schedule. Weekly publication will resume with the September 10 issue.

# Reagan Rex

On his way home from the Moscow summit, President Reagan stopped off at Buckingham Palace for tea with the Queen. It was an absolutely fitting thing for him to do. Just a few days earlier, a Federal judge had awarded him secrecy powers more suitable to a medieval king than to a President.

This past August unions of Federal workers filed a lawsuit to stop the Administration from requiring more than 2 million Federal workers to sign nondisclosure agreements in an effort to silence dissent. Workers had to promise not to reveal classified information, or even information deemed "classifiable." In December Congress prohibited the implementation of the secrecy agreements, saying that they violate the employees' First Amendment rights and interfere with the right of Congress to be fully informed of waste, fraud and abuse. The Administration countered in court that it was not the agreements but Congress' restriction that was illegal.

The court's decision, the implications of which were overlooked by the press, was extraordinary. U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Gasch on May 27 overturned the Congressional prohibition, effectively giving the President sole authority over national security information. Quoting Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, Gasch referred to "the constitutional duty of the Executive—*as a matter of sovereign prerogative*" [emphasis added] to preserve government secrets. In accordance with this approach, Judge Gasch's decision allows Congress one role in this sphere of national security information: to "facilitate secrecy with appropriate criminal and civil sanctions."

But does the President have sole constitutional powers over secrecy, as the judge ruled? In deciding this constitutional showdown between Congress and the executive, the judge conceded that neither political branch "is expressly charged by the Constitution with regulating accumulation of or access to national security information." Rather, the judge bestowed the monarchical powers on the presidency based on the inherent authority of the President as head of the executive branch and as Commander in Chief of the armed forces. He quoted selected court decisions supporting his theory and relied heavily on such tenuous rationales as "the sensitive and complicated role" of the President in conducting foreign relations.

The judge weighed the powers of the President, as Commander in Chief and chief executive, against the free-speech rights of government employees, the need of Congress to know and the constitutional balance of powers among the three branches of government. The prerogatives of the presidency, he found, far outweighed those of the other

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sides. Worse, Judge Gasch's decision reinforces the authority of the President's National Security Decision Directive 84 issued in 1983, which the secrecy agreements implement. N.S.D.D. 84, called the antileak directive, is one of almost 300 N.S.D.D.s issued by President Reagan and carries the force of law. The vast majority of N.S.D.D.s are secret even from Congress; Gasch's order, which must stand the test of appeal, seems to place them beyond the reach of judicial or Congressional review.

Judge Gasch's ruling, which will be appealed directly to the Supreme Court, reinforces the penchant for secrecy that produced the Iran/*contra* scandal, which would not have survived the normal deliberative process by government officials from whom it was kept hidden. It is this secrecy, this black hole at the heart of government, that the decision not only endorses but enshrines.

EVE PELL AND
ANGUS MACKENZIE

*Eve Pell and Angus Mackenzie are directors of the Freedom of Information Project at the Center for Investigative Reporting.*

# Killing Fields

A paid advertisement run recently in a Salvadoran newspaper declared that "the horror of the violence of the past is resurgent in the nation, threatening to drown us in a bloodbath of uncontrollable and disastrous consequences." Once again, the ad continued, "the threat and the terror of dark, nocturnal death . . . runs with impunity through the entire country."

One might expect such a statement to come from El Salvador's private human rights groups or opposition labor federations. But this denunciation was issued by the government's own Human Rights Commission. Although the ad did not assign blame for the several cases of political killings it mentioned, witnesses have linked members of the armed forces to most of them. The statement indicates how serious (and undeniable) the deterioration in the human rights situation has become. Yet the terror has gone largely ignored in Washington and the U.S. press. Perhaps this is because the number of deaths is no longer in the thousands; or perhaps it is because this single-minded capital can focus on only one Central American war at a time.

Figures compiled by Tutela Legal, the human rights office of the Roman Catholic archdiocese, show that death squad murders in the first four months of 1988 have almost equaled the total for all of 1987. For the first time in seven years the rate of civilian killings by the armed forces and the right has risen. The F.M.L.N. guerrillas have also contributed to the carnage, as deaths from land mines, most of which are believed to have been laid by them, are sharply rising. Needless to say, the most important human rights statistic of all—the number of military or police officers prosecuted for human rights violations—remains a steady zero.

The incidents referred to by the government Human Rights Commission have been investigated and documented by others. They are classic Salvadoran horror stories:

§ On January 31, soldiers were seen picking up three young peasant men near San José Guayabal, Cuscatlán. Their tortured bodies appeared the next day at the Puerta del Diablo, once a notorious death squad dumping ground.

§ In Tepemechín, Morazán, soldiers tortured and murdered two young peasants on February 26. A farmer heard their screams as pieces of their bodies—ears, a nose, thumbs and a fourth finger—were cut off. A third young man picked up the same night has disappeared; another arrested several weeks later was shot trying to flee; yet another was held for several days of torture and interrogation.

§ On April 14, uniformed soldiers picked up three sand diggers in Soyapango, San Salvador; their bodies were discovered two days later on the edge of a highway. On April 25, soldiers allegedly took 45-year-old Juan Hector Villanueva from his home in a hamlet outside Soyapango and shot him dead, along with his 77-year-old mother.

The resurgence of death squads and army killings is a major defeat for the Reagan Administration's much-touted El Salvador policy. President José Napoleón Duarte's eclipse by the far-right Arena party (and his sidelining by terminal illness) only make matters worse.

There are hints of renewed Congressional concern about El Salvador, especially in light of Arena's anticipated victory in next year's presidential election. Senators Mark Hatfield and Tom Harkin are pressing to have last November's recommendations by the bipartisan Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus incorporated into the 1989 foreign aid appropriations bill. These include a shift from war-related aid to genuine development assistance and linking U.S. military and economic aid to a negotiated settlement of the war.

On another front, more than a hundred members of the House have signed a letter asking the U.S. trade representative to investigate labor rights in El Salvador, in keeping with requirements that governments receiving trade benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences respect worker rights. The trade representative's response to a similar letter circulated by eight representatives last year was that repression in El Salvador has been directed at Communists, not unionists. (At last count, sixteen labor unionists or peasant cooperative members had been murdered and six "disappeared" since April 1987—most allegedly at the hands of government forces or death squads.)

Congress is an imperfect tool to shape foreign policy, especially in the face of executive resistance. Presidential candidates should be pressed to oppose U.S. funding for a counterinsurgency strategy based on terror. And the Reagan Administration must reverse its blank-check approach to El Salvador. A serious threat to cut military aid that is in the pipeline, if army and death squad killings are not ended and the perpetrators punished, would not likely be ignored in El Salvador. In December 1983, the only time such a threat was ever delivered (by none other than George Bush), the impact was considerable and positive. But with the currency of U.S. threats devalued by the Noriega debacle, this one might actually have to be carried out.

ANNE MANUEL

*Anne Manuel is reports editor for Americas Watch, a human rights monitoring organization.*

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# BEAT THE DEVIL.

## The Sun King's Progress

The Toronto economic summit brought with it something now inseparable from such convocations of leaders of the free, industrialized, advanced capitalist world: suspension of all rights of assembly and kindred privileges associated with democracy. The provincial government of Ontario instructed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to deny all requests to demonstrate during the sojourn of the magnificent seven.

The way courtiers comport themselves in the presence of vested power is an important index of the degree to which any irreverent spirit of liberty has been eroded. Readers of this column may recall the fate of those two fine dogs, Speck and Lady, sacrificed on the altar of servility, shot and then incinerated because security officers and the Secret Service deemed canine copulation an improper activity at a Topeka airport on the day of a presidential visit.

The President's progress round the country now smacks of Oriental despotism, of the sort savored by King Bhumibol of Thailand, *aka* Rama IX, before whose portrait a Thai politician last year had to grovel for the *lèse-majesté* of remarking in public that he wouldn't mind being a king himself so he could sit around all day and do nothing. A Thai appeals court reversed an earlier judgment of innocence and gave the man six years in a Thai jail on a diet of fish heads. You won't find too much in the Western press about this and other examples of the king cult in Thailand because many Far Eastern correspondents are based in Bangkok and have an understandable reluctance to offend their hosts.

## The King on Campus

Every outing by the U.S. President is now an exercise of immense logistical complexity and staggering expense. Onslaughts on the rights of free expression and assembly are something I became aware of from visits to campuses that the President had recently graced with his presence. Back in mid-1987 I gave a talk at Purdue, and my hosts reported the President's progress through West Lafayette, Indiana, and the campus the previous April 9.

Several hundred children were mustered at the airport under a hot sun and the eyes of the Secret Service, in a "secure" area that they were unable to leave for three hours, awaiting the President's descent. As recapped by the *Journal & Courier*, in reverential tones probably unrivaled even in the Pyongyang *Times*'s account of Kim Il Sung, "About 10,200 people . . . packed the sections of Mackey Arena open to the public yesterday and turned an afternoon into a massive three-hour pep rally. . . . The crowd was so excited, even a no-smoking announcement drew a huge cheer." Finally the President was introduced by Indiana Governor Robert Orr, who duly proclaimed him "the greatest President the United States has had in my lifetime." A small knot of demonstrators at the airport received predictable vilification, and the Mackey Arena suffered no manifestation of dissent.

Similar Riefenstahlian excesses occurred during the President's visit this spring to the Notre Dame campus, whose president until last year was the odious Theodore Hesburgh. Hesburgh had a genius for presenting Notre Dame as the center of the moral universe and himself as the embodiment of ethical sensibility, while simultaneously conferring an honorary degree on José Napoleón Duarte and maintaining the university's $20 million investment in companies doing business with South Africa.

The Supreme Being was on show on March 9 for the dedication of the Knute Rockne stamp. He entered the Athletic and Convocation Center through a back door under heavy guard. More than 11,000 students, faculty, staff and South Bend residents bellowed and waved small American flags, which had been distributed in the auditorium. At one point, quoting from the movie *Knute Rockne—All American*, in which he played the football player George Gipp, Reagan misread his Teleprompter and told the crowd to "win one for the Gippet," thus reducing the majesty of the exhortation. A group of courageous protesters braved obloquy, under the banner of Pax Christi, while counterdemonstrators held a mighty banner, "Pax Commies—Christ Would Have Funded the Contras."

A month earlier, on February 8, the President's 1984 campaign committee agreed to pay half of a $39,000 court-approved settlement to a group of demonstrators who had been blocked from a speech given by Reagan. Yet even while the settlement was being drafted, Secret Service men were ripping down protest signs and otherwise interfering with the rights of students protesting a presidential visit to Duke University, in North Carolina.

This was a fairly typical excursion by the Supreme Being. Less than a week before his descent unto Durham the White House asked that 1,200 sixth-graders be marshaled as "greeters" at the helipad on Duke's intramural field, gracing the President's passage from chopper to bulletproof limousine, which had been flown in the previous Sunday.

A week before Reagan's arrival a fifteen-person White House team convened to review every particular of the Supreme Being's impending display in Cameron Indoor Stadium before 7,000 people, crowning a conference on drug abuse. Two people from the advance team asked that the University Union donate paints, paper and poster board for a "Welcome Reagan to Duke" sign-painting party and recruited students from every fraternity and sorority to prepare the posters, which were then placed at strategic camera-line locations inside the stadium.

Meanwhile, flyers announcing a protest (which was eventually attended by about 500 students and local residents) were being ripped down by White House personnel. Students inside the stadium distributing flyers detailing the C.I.A.-*contra*-coke connection were being thrown out of the hall by security guards. Placards and sheets were either torn down or confiscated at the door as "security risks." Secret Service policy states that "anybody can put up any sign at an event so long as it is not on a stick or pole," according to a member of the White House staff quoted by a Durham newspaper.

At Duke the courtiers of the Sun King behaved in so oafish a fashion that students threatened to file suit. In the end the university authorities apologized. This is part of the nor-

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mal pattern for such abuses. Stage One is the manic hysteria of the courtiers, denial of free speech, execution of Speck, Lady, and ouster of kindred human threats to dignity. This is followed by Stage Two, buck-passing of responsibility between Secret Service and local goons, and agreement that maybe zeal in the interest of the Supreme Being got a bit out of hand. By that time exactly the same farcical exercise in despotic arrogance is occurring somewhere else in the country.

## The Eye of the Beholder

Duke, outside Durham (home of the original bullpen), is a curious mixture of neoclassical and neo-Gothic (and, of course, given the presence of Fred Jameson, postmodern). Shanties, erected to protest apartheid, have also decorated the grounds, eliciting the following interesting letter in *The Chronicle:*

> Mary-Elise Haug argues in her letter to the Chronicle, "Don't Build Political Mess," that the building of shanties on Duke's campus "violates our rights as students to a beautiful campus." I would like to thank her for looking out for my rights as a Duke student. However, I couldn't help looking over my list of important worldly rights and—I'm sorry—my right to a beautiful campus doesn't quite surpass my right to be treated as an equal and complete individual or even my right to live anywhere in my rightful homeland, especially when I'm in the majority.
>
> But, do not get me wrong, I'm not downplaying the importance of a beautiful campus. After all, I think it's great that so many people worldwide can appreciate what a black man can create given the opportunity. After all, a black man did design Cameron Indoor Stadium, Duke's South hospital, the Allen building, along with the rest of Duke's West Campus—including the chapel. The man who accomplished all this is Julian Abele and speaking as his great-grand niece, I don't think he would protest DSAC's building shanty prisons on his "beautiful campus." Maybe the reason I'm so certain that he wouldn't object is because he was a victim of apartheid in this country. He was not so fortunate as you and I to travel freely across the state borders. He never came to Duke to see what he had created because his repulsion of the segregated South made it impossible for him to travel further south than Philadelphia.
>
> So, perhaps the next time you hear or speak a complaint about how shanties invade upon a student's right to a beautiful campus or the next time you reflect upon Duke's beauty, think about how ridiculously superficial a beautiful campus is compared to the ugliness and brutality of racism.
>
> Susan Cook

# EXCHANGE.

*(Continued From Page 2)*

ly successful attack of the war when they occupied Siuna and attacked the Sandinistas in two other towns. I also think the rebels killed and wounded more than 100 civilians—an action that seriously undermined the potential political benefit of their attack and that won the *contras* few supporters.

That is what I reported on December 25 of last year in *The New York Times*—an article that I stand by. I invite your readers to look at my report and judge for themselves.

*James LeMoyne*

**COCKBURN REPLIES**

*Aptos, Calif.*

Although it takes a slight effort to recall it today, back in December 1987, on the eve of cease-fire talks and with Congress debating a $270 million aid package, the *contras* were desperate to prove that both politically and militarily they were a formidable enterprise inside Nicaragua. Bosco Matamoros told reporters that this objective was foremost in planning the December 20 attacks on Siuna and two other northeastern Nicaraguan mining towns. Thus James LeMoyne's report, published on Christmas Day and announcing a considerable military feat by the *contras* in the supposed occupation of Siuna, was of great political importance, as both he and his editors at *The New York Times* surely knew. That is why I devoted much space to his account, along with detailed criticisms of his false account of the Costa Rican summit and of the report by the verification commission on compliance with the terms of the Guatemala accord. I note that LeMoyne does not even attempt to defend his work in that regard.

LeMoyne's letter is revealing of his journalistic standards, more so than I would have expected. The two men to whom he specifically turns to substantiate his story, Dr. Klaus Helber and Oswaldo Bonilla, both reject his version of what they either said or saw. Dr. Helber has furnished to *The Nation* a written account to that effect, which begins, "The contra didn't occupy Siuna." From Managua last week, interviewed on the telephone in Spanish by my colleague José Díaz, Bonilla said the same thing. LeMoyne also misrepresents Bonilla's U.P.I. dispatch, which appeared on the front page of *La Prensa* on December 24.

LeMoyne writes, with sarcastic intonation, that I relied on the account of "someone named Mark Cook." As I said in my column, Cook is a freelance journalist living off and on in Managua since 1982, permanently (unlike LeMoyne, who swoops in and out of the Intercontinental) since 1985. He traveled to Siuna with LeMoyne and other journalists, and on the flight back to Managua, sat beside LeMoyne. Cook tells me that on that return trip there was a vigorous exchange in which other journalists challenged LeMoyne's version of what had happened in Siuna, culminating with LeMoyne exploding at Cook and shouting, "Just die, die," before burying himself in his notes. Sarcasms about the authority of a mere "someone" won't make controverting data go away. Let's take the points in detail.

"The Sandinistas bombed Siuna from the air," LeMoyne writes. Dr. Helber, interviewed by Cook in late May, along with other Siuna residents, states emphatically that they did no such thing. LeMoyne says that most of his interviews during a walk through Siuna were conducted in the company of Bonilla, who tape-recorded them. Last week Bonilla told us that he was with LeMoyne the entire time and that, though he has since erased the recordings, none of the interviewees said anything about the Sandinista Army bombing the center of town, nor did he himself see any evidence of such bombing. "There would have been a lot more casualties if they had bombed the center. They attacked the periphery," Bonilla says. He also says that with LeMoyne he attended the press briefing by Major Sosa but states that Sosa said nothing about the Sandinistas bombing Siuna.

No one Cook talked to in Siuna ever mentioned Sandinista bombing, only *contra* mortaring. As for the airstrip, Cook says there was no evidence of bomb damage there by anyone, Sandinistas or *contras.* In his article LeMoyne explained the lack of damage by writing that "the [Sandinista] bombs were apparently defective; two sat in their craters today, unexploded." What Major Sosa did tell reporters was that the army bombed a

*(Continued on Page 21)*

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# BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN AND JEFFERSON MORLEY

## ■ Levine Backs the Machine

On August 11, 1986, Mel Levine, one of the bright, young reform-minded Democrats in the House, denounced "well-heeled" special-interest groups that unfairly influence politics. He offered a solution: a bill that would provide public funding of House elections and limit campaign contributions and expenditures. Last month Levine helped lead the charge in his home state of California against Proposition 68, a ballot initiative taking a strikingly similar approach to the financing of state legislative races. In a mailing delivered to voters just days before the June 7 election, Levine declared the measure a "disaster" that would "increase Republican and special-interest power."

Levine's back-flip came as part of an assault on Prop 68 waged by the liberal Democratic "Waxman-Berman machine"—named after Representatives Henry Waxman and Howard Berman—which dominates politics in West Los Angeles. That attack was somewhat successful. Prop 68 won a majority, but because a weaker reform measure prohibiting public financing and sponsored by opponents of Prop 68 earned a greater percentage, much of Prop 68 is rendered moot.

"Prop 68 was about as close to Levine's own bill as you can get," says a Washington-based advocate for campaign-finance reform, referring to the 1986 measure. Levine tells us that opposing the measure was "a very tough decision." He says his main concern was that the spending caps (for example $225,000 for an Assembly seat in the general election) were not high enough to allow a credible campaign. Yet Prop 68's limits for state races were roughly proportional to, if not higher than, the spending ceiling Levine had urged for Congressional contests. The campaign manager for Prop 68, Walter Zelman, offers another explanation for Levine's opposition: "Reducing the power of money in politics would reduce the power of the Waxman-Berman machine. They decided to fight to retain their power, with the trade-off being that the special interests can keep their power as well."

## ■ Metzenbaum Pulls the Switch

On February 8, 1984, Howard Metzenbaum took to the Senate floor to read a list of fifty-eight names—people who had been sentenced to death for murders they did not commit. The list was potent ammunition in a debate on a death penalty bill. Capital punishment, Metzenbaum proclaimed, "reflects a complete lack of appreciation for the sanctity of life. No civilized society should sanction such horrible, painful and irreversible punishment."

Metzenbaum's principled opposition to state-sponsored execution has become a casualty of the war on drugs. On June 10 he joined sixty-four other Senators in voting for the death penalty for drug dealers who kill. In making the switch, Metzenbaum probably was looking toward his tough re-election battle against Cleveland's popular Republican Mayor, George Voinovich. But, as one Senate aide notes only half facetiously, the call for the blood of homicidal pushers may, in effect, keep more dealers alive. "This should be called the Drug Dealer Protection Act," the aide says. "After all, who gets killed by drug dealers? Other drug dealers."

## ■ Schroeder Cuts a Deal

In 1986, Representative Pat Schroeder introduced the Whistleblower Protection Act to bolster existing but inadequate safeguards for government employees who reveal waste, fraud or abuse. Now Schroeder has dumped her own bill to make way for a White House measure that is a whistleblower's nightmare.

Schroeder's bill passed the House but died after the Senate failed to approve its own version. After she reintroduced it last year as H.R. 25, Representative Frank Horton, a Republican on Schroeder's Civil Service Subcommittee, crafted an alternative with the Office of Management and Budget. "This so-called compromise is just an effort to gut the bill," says Sheldon Cohen of the American Bar Association, which supports H.R. 25. Yet Schroeder has accepted the O.M.B.-Horton package and intends to push it in the House, according to one of her aides.

In the next few weeks the Senate is expected to vote on a bill supported by whistleblower advocates. It would reform the Office of Special Counsel, which is supposed to investigate and prosecute whistleblower cases. The O.S.C., though, has been assailed by Schroeder and others for working against whistleblowers. But the Schroeder-backed compromise, says Tom Devine, legal director of the Government Accountability Project, "has no restrictions on the O.S.C. and even gives it more authority." This bill, Cohen adds, "doesn't reform O.S.C.; it legitimizes its problems. No bill would be better."

Why would Schroeder back the O.M.B. measure? "There's no rational accounting for it," says Cohen. Devine and lobbyists working on the issue say they believe Schroeder has cut a deal with Horton: If she backs him on this bill, he won't obstruct other legislation she hopes to get through the subcommittee. A Schroeder aide, defending her decision, insists that the O.M.B.-Horton bill is stronger than the Senate measure—a claim Cohen and Devine scornfully reject. "It's terrible," observes Devine, "that free speech and the protection of courageous whistleblowers have been placed on the trading block."

## ■ Duke Goes Soft on Sex?

The right wing's researchers have begun to dig into Michael Dukakis's past. And one group thinks it has already struck gold. The Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life, an antiabortion group, announces in its newsletter the discovery that Dukakis, as a young Massachusetts legislator, introduced bills to repeal "Laws Punishing Unnatural and Lascivious Acts with Another Person," the "Law Prohibiting Fornication" and the "Law Punishing Blasphemy." This "unbelievable record," the group crows, "ought to catch up with him."

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# High Concept

EDWARD SOREL

IN '83 I WROTE A SCREEN-PLAY 'BOUT A TEN-YEAR-OLD WHO SWITCHES PLACES WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES...
...Y'SEE, EACH TAKES OVER THE BODY OF THE OTHER AND FOR A CLIMAX I HAD THE KID ALMOST START WORLD WAR III!
MATTHAU LOVED THE SCRIPT BUT THE STUDIOS TURNED US DOWN... "TOO FAR OUT" THEY SAID.
SINCE THEN SIX "SWITCH" MOVIES HAVE COME OUT BUT NONE OF THEM WAS A SMASH UNTIL "BIG" WITH TOM HANKS. IT GROSSED ZILLIONS!
NOW THE STUDIOS ARE HOT FOR "SWITCH" MOVIES, SO I WENT TO PARAMOUNT AND OUTLINED MY OLD SCREEN-PLAY...
...I DESCRIBED HOW THE KID FALLS ASLEEP AT CABINET MEETINGS AND INSULTS THE RUSSIAN PREMIER WHEN HE GOES TO MOSCOW...
...BEFORE I FINISH, THE HONCHO THERE SAYS, "SORRY, WE'RE JUST NOT BUYING SATIRES ON REAGAN THIS WEEK."
SO HELP ME GOD, I NEVER EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT REAGAN WHEN I WROTE IT!
IF WORD GETS OUT THAT I WROTE A SATIRE I'LL BE DEAD IN THIS TOWN.
Edward Sorel

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# ARTICLES.

CHRISTIC'S LAWSUIT

# Is There Really A 'Secret Team'?

*As this issue went to press, the Christic Institute's lawsuit was dismissed by a Federal District Court in Miami. The institute says it will appeal.* —*The Editors*

DAVID CORN

Is a "Secret Team" of renegade U.S. military and intelligence officers to blame for many of the national security scandals of the past three decades? That is at the heart of the Christic Institute's lawsuit against a number of *contra* supporters. No matter what happens with this case, critics of U.S. national security policy still have to judge for themselves the Secret Team theory, which has gained so much currency in left-of-center circles.

Christic, with a hard-working staff led by attorney Daniel Sheehan, has injected "Secret Team" into the lexicon of the left as a shorthand explanation of the Iran/*contra* affair, spreading its message beyond the courtroom with great success. "Stop the Secret Team" bumper stickers proliferate; mass mailings have introduced the Secret Team to hundreds of thousands of households; local progressive groups have reprinted Christic Institute material. The lawsuit even won a mention on *Cagney and Lacey*.

The civil suit, brought under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act, charges twenty-nine individuals—including retired Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, financier Albert Hakim, *contra* help-mate Robert Owen, retired Gen. John Singlaub, C.I.A.-linked rancher John Hull, rebel leader Adolfo Calero, former Central Intelligence Agency officials Theodore Shackley and Thomas Clines, mercenary Thomas Posey and Colombian drug kingpin Jorge Ochoa—with taking part in a criminal conspiracy that has engaged in political assassination, gunrunning and drug trafficking. One of their many alleged criminal exploits was the 1984 bombing attack on then-*contra* leader Edén Pastora's jungle outpost at La Penca, Costa Rica, in which eight people, including a reporter who was a U.S. citizen, were killed. Two American journalists—Tony Avirgan, who was injured at La Penca, and his wife, Martha Honey—are the plaintiffs in the Christic suit.

The institute crafted its RICO strategy to fill a vacuum. By the time the lawsuit was first filed in May 1986, Congress had swallowed the false assurances of the National Security Council troika—Lieut. Col. Oliver North, Rear Adm. John Poindexter and Robert McFarlane—that the N.S.C. was keeping its distance from the *contras*. After the scandal erupted, both the Tower commission report and the Iran/*contra* Congressional hearings let key figures off the hook and left important avenues of inquiry unexplored. Independent counsel Lawrence Walsh's investigation, which has targeted only North, Poindexter, Secord, Hakim and former C.I.A. agent Joe Fernandez, has been bogged down in legal complexities, and the trials may be made moot by a presidential pardon. How could one get to the bottom of all this and hold individuals accountable? The institute found its answer in the RICO statute, which turns citizen plaintiffs into "private attorneys general" with the power of subpoena, allowing them to pursue criminal conspiracies.

Christic Institute staff members boast that their lawsuit is the first of its kind to get even close to trial. The judge's decision to allow the group to take depositions from the defendants and others (including some government officials) and to subpoena records testifies to the success of the strategy. But the Secret Team concept, which is at the heart of the courtroom strategy, serves more than just legal purposes. It is also a political device to describe the complex workings of the national security apparatus and rally public opposition to it. Moreover, Christic offers the Secret Team as an ambitious historical thesis that purports to explain much of U.S. foreign policy since 1959.

These various aims, though, can collide with one another. The reliance on a Secret Team may work fine given the confines of a RICO suit. Outside, however, it may undermine the Christic Institute's broader public education campaign, which aims to raise questions about the national security state and U.S. foreign policy as a whole.

Some of these problems are apparent in a document filed with the court in March. Titled "A Declaration of Plaintiff's Counsel" but more commonly known as the second affidavit, it is the most thorough description available of the Christic Institute case. Its predecessor, filed by Sheehan in December 1986 and citing dozens of anonymous sources, was a rambling, first-person account of Sheehan's investigation into the Administration's covert war in Central America.

Sheehan said that in the course of this research, which grew out of his work for the Sanctuary movement, he had stumbled on a conspiratorial "'secret team' which carried on its own, independent American foreign policy." Its Mr. Big, he maintained, was Theodore Shackley, a legendary career C.I.A. official who rose to the top ranks of the agency before his contacts with renegade agent Edwin Wilson led to an early retirement. Sheehan's first affidavit traced the supposed history of Shackley's crew from the Bay of Pigs to North's *contra* support scheme, and cited as fact that the *contra* resupply network run by Secord and Hakim was supervised by Shackley. It was a kind of How the World Works According to the Christic Institute, and was widely disseminated.

The 300-page second affidavit is a great improvement, removing Sheehan from the narrative and offering a more coherent picture that benefits from months of research and deposing of witnesses. However, as a guide to the world of covert operations, it shares in the most significant analytical

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failing of the original affidavit by continuing to ascribe some of the worst U.S. actions abroad since the fall of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959 to a small gang of rogue operatives. According to Christic, the campaign against Castro, the war in Laos, the Operation Phoenix assassination program in Vietnam, the puzzling Nugan Hand Bank scandal in Australia, the covert war in Central America—all labeled "ventures" of the "Enterprise," or Secret Team—have been the work of a small number of U.S. officials acting in a "private," nongovernmental capacity. This lets the C.I.A., the Pentagon, the State Department and various Administrations off the hook.

Thus, for example, when Vice President Richard Nixon and Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles began to consider the elimination of Fidel Castro, they did so, according to Christic, as private citizens. The second affidavit's account of the formation of the 2506 Brigade to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs fails to mention its chief architect: the C.I.A. Similarly, Shackley, who was chief of station at JM/WAVE, the agency's Miami base, is said to have been operating "in his private capacity" when he directed "assassination attempts against Castro."

On to the secret war in Laos, where Shackley, by then C.I.A. station chief in Vientiane, unofficially "supervised criminal operations" by managing the "secret criminal army composed of Hmong (or Meo) tribesmen." The second affidavit alleges that Shackley, his deputy Thomas Clines and Secord, who managed air operations for the C.I.A. in Laos, directly aided the Hmong's opium-running efforts and that their associates distributed drugs in the United States. Whether true or not—the affidavit offers no conclusive proof—this misses the point. As Leslie and Andrew Cockburn demonstrated in their recent PBS documentary, *Guns, Drugs and the C.I.A.*, the secret war in Laos was a massive, and official, C.I.A. operation, with the support of a full range of U.S. government agencies.

Christic Institute people are the first to admit that the rogue individual theory is prompted by legal necessity. "The design of the case was not to involve the government because of all the difficulties in suing the government," explains Edith Holleman, a Christic Institute lawyer who supervised the writing of "A Declaration of Plaintiff's Counsel." The institute's argument, she says, is that all these episodes can be considered nongovernmental actions because the officials involved were acting above and beyond their authority. To suggest that these events reflected a pattern of government action, Holleman says, "is looking at it from a political scientist's or historian's point of view—that the National Security Act of 1947 led to covert operations going amok. Alleging that covert operations have gone amok is not going to cut in court." Holleman cautions that "a lot of people make the mistake of not seeing [the declaration] as a legal finding. A lot of journalists make that mistake." She adds, "Lawsuits are not history books. They're only parts of history books."

Even acknowledging Holleman's caveats, however, the problem is that the Christic Institute, in pursuit of its educational and political mission, is offering this version of history to the public at $15 a copy. Those institute supporters who read the declaration will presumably not be versed in the technicalities of RICO law. With that audience in mind, it is fair to ask whether the spin that the second affidavit puts on events for legal purposes does not, in fact, distort the historical picture. If so, is Christic serving the best interests of its constituents by placing a problematic document in their hands?

The bulk of the second affidavit deals with the covert war in Central America. Relying on depositions taken by Christic Institute lawyers, the Iran/*contra* Congressional inquiry and the work of Avirgan, Honey and other investigative reporters, it provides a good selection of the greatest hits of the Iran/*contra* affair.

As an analytical document the declaration is hampered by its adherence to the Secret Team theory. That term, it should be noted, has been purged from the second affidavit and replaced by "Enterprise." Not so coincidentally, that is the very same term Secord used during the hearings to describe the operation that he and North put together. The Christic Institute relies on this semantic maneuver to demonstrate continuity between the Secret Team and the North-Secord ring. "The RICO statute requires an 'enterprise,'" Edith Holleman explains. "It's a legal word. . . . We allege [the North-Secord operation] is the same enterprise in a different permutation."

But is a sleight of hand involved in this change of terminology? In the first affidavit, Theodore Shackley was portrayed as the capo of the Secret Team *and* the North-Secord Iran/*contra* operation. Yet he is almost entirely absent from the declaration's account of the *contra* war. That's because little if any evidence has so far come to light that

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connects him to Secord's *contra* resupply operation. Shackley's absence is a problem for the Secret Team theory, for in the first affidavit it was his presence in both activities that provided the major connection.

North's outfit, according to the second affidavit, was "accountable only to the Enterprise. North was to act as the 'liaison' to the off-the-shelf operation for the men inside the Reagan Administration who, in their private capacity, participated in these illegal operations." But was North serving the mysterious Enterprise or Ronald Reagan? The nub of the lawsuit, the La Penca bombing, presents similar difficulties. Clearly North and his friends in the Honduras-based Nicaraguan Democratic Force wanted to get rid of the troublesome Pastora, who refused to ally his Southern Front forces with the F.D.N. But was the attack on Pastora an Enterprise hit or a C.I.A. action? Pastora himself accuses "Ollie North's group or certain sectors of the Central Intelligence Agency." The Christic Institute has gathered compelling evidence that suggests John Hull's involvement. But, again, was Hull acting as an agent of the Enterprise or the C.I.A.?

The Secret Team theory runs into more problems when the second affidavit moves on to the Iran arms deal, where it ignores crucial parts of the public record. The declaration creates the impression that the entire initiative was engineered by Shackley in two meetings, one in November 1984 with the broker Manucher Ghorbanifar, the other in May 1985 with N.S.C. consultant Michael Ledeen. (Shackley was supposedly scared that C.I.A. Beirut station chief William Buckley, who had been taken hostage, would spill the beans about the Enterprise.) "Anxious to obtain Buckley's freedom," the document argues, "defendant Shackley took steps to cause the Reagan Administration to begin negotiations for Buckley's release." This ignores Israel's critical role. In August 1985, Reagan and McFarlane responded favorably to Israel's request to replenish TOW missiles it intended to sell to Iran. Are we meant to believe that their strings were being pulled by Shackley?

Again taking advantage of the linguistic confusion, the second affidavit quotes the Iran/*contra* committees' final report to demonstrate that "the Enterprise was involved in every N.S.C.-connected shipment of weapons to Iran from November 1985 on." In 1986, the declaration says, after several transactions with Iran, "the Enterprise began plans for another arms deal." There is no reference to the top-secret intelligence finding that Reagan signed approving this shipment. In fact, the second affidavit utterly ignores the role of the President, George Bush, the Cabinet and the C.I.A. in the Iran initiative.

The second affidavit also suffers in some places from flimsy evidence and sourcing. One of the most intriguing assertions—that Shackley is now the secret kingpin of an assassin-training operation—rests on the uncorroborated claims of one man, Gene Wheaton, a former U.S. Army investigator who has hobnobbed with spooks and mercenaries. His reliability is not entirely solid. And the Christic Institute's effort to tie all nefarious activity in Central America to a single conspiracy leads to some internal inconsistencies and inaccuracies. One example is the charge that the Enterprise was behind an attempt by several C.I.A.-connected *contras* to have drug dealer George Morales contribute to their cause. But according to Congressional testimony, Morales agreed to help *contras* working with Edén Pastora, the very man the Enterprise supposedly wanted to put out of business. In another instance, the declaration repeats a very serious allegation, attributed in the first affidavit to an anonymous source, that professional anticommunist John Singlaub arranged for an associate to help the La Penca bomber build his explosive device—even though the source, during his later public deposition, denied ever making such a charge.

Precisely because the 300-page second affidavit is not journalism or history but a legal brief that interprets information to strengthen the Christic Institute's case, it is ill-suited for a public education campaign. The institute's effort to interpret cardinal events of the past thirty years has undoubtedly influenced the way in which some Americans view the world. It deserves credit for trying to help people make sense of all these episodes, and for recognizing the Iran/*contra* scandal and its significance early on. It has kept the investigative fires burning, sought to hold individuals accountable for their roles in the affair and probed issues overlooked by the Congressional investigating committees (including the *contra* drug connection and the La Penca bombing). Depositions taken by its lawyers—for example, those of Donald Gregg and Samuel Watson, aides to Bush—have yielded important new information. These are no small accomplishments.

Yet with its advocacy of the Secret Team theory, the Christic Institute has painted itself into a corner. If all these ventures are the handiwork of a few rogues, there is no reason to worry about the national security system at large. What's the remedy for a few bad apples? Better screening of personnel.

That's not what the Christic Institute really wants. In a newsletter published last year, it stated:

> To solve the public policy scandal before [it], Congress must not only expose the Secret Team, but examine the entire national security state apparatus that gave it birth. This means exploring how government agencies constructed after World War II—such as the C.I.A. and the N.S.C.—have consistently violated the sovereignty of foreign nations while undermining our own constitutional democracy at home through secrecy, deception and law-breaking. Only by going to the roots of the crisis—reforming and/or abolishing the national security state system—can Congress make the fundamental reforms needed.

This is a more sophisticated view. In a flier that lists questions on the Iran/*contra* affair that should be put to presidential candidates, the Christic Institute presents the right inquiries (e.g., "Do you believe that covert operations are incompatible with an open and democratic society?") without any reference to the Secret Team.

But of all the components of the Christic Institute message, it is the Secret Team that resonates most widely.

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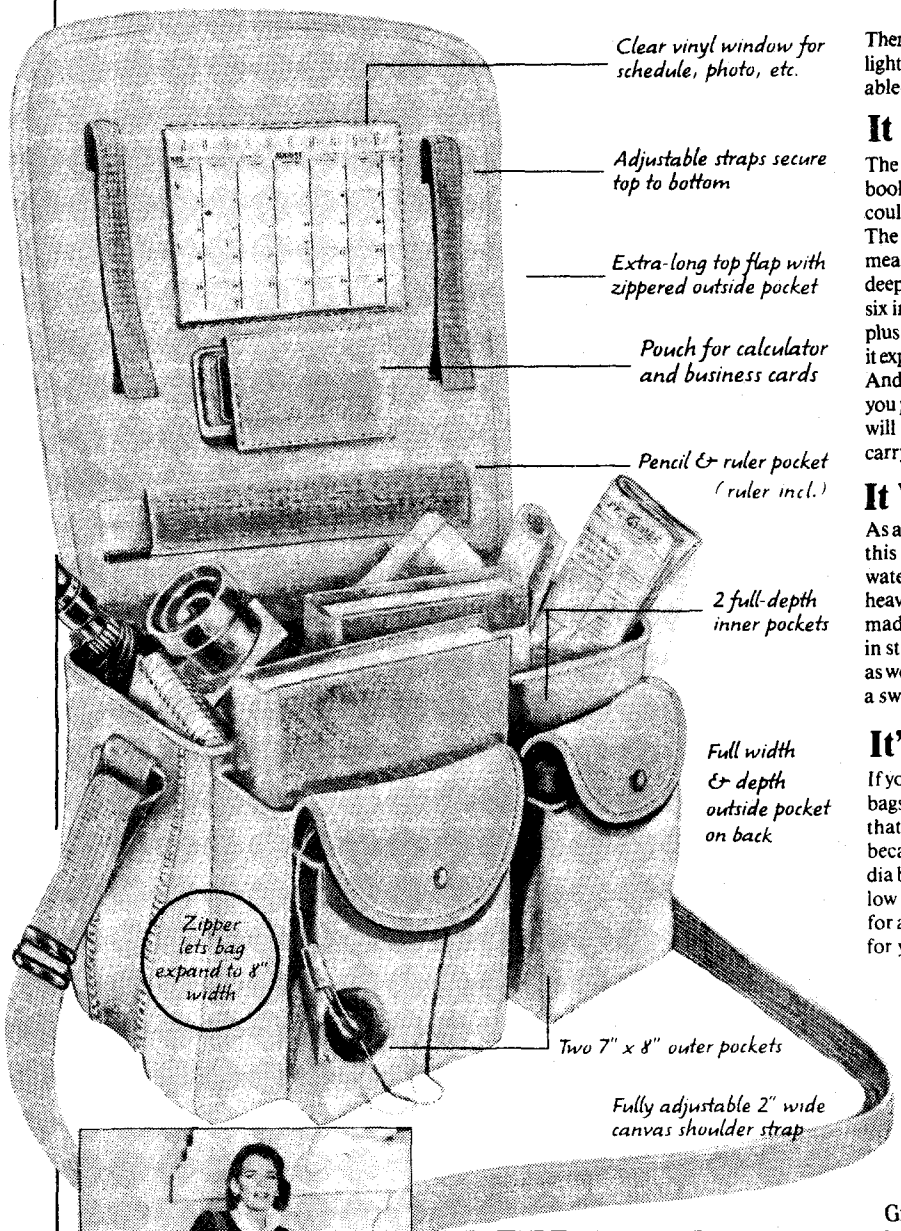
# SCANDIA: The Shoulder Bag That Has It All


Clear vinyl window for schedule, photo, etc.
Adjustable straps secure top to bottom
Extra-long top flap with zippered outside pocket
Pouch for calculator and business cards
Pencil & ruler pocket (ruler incl.)
2 full-depth inner pockets
Full width & depth outside pocket on back
Zipper lets bag expand to 8" width
Two 7" x 8" outer pockets
Fully adjustable 2" wide canvas shoulder strap

There's simply no other shoulder bag that's as roomy, lightweight, versatile, stylish, durable—and affordable—as the Scandia.

## It Holds Everything . . .

The Scandia is intelligently designed to hold all the books, paper, equipment, clothes, and sundries you could ever need to carry.

The sturdy canvas Scandia measures 15½" across, 11" deep, and 4" wide, and has six inner and outer pockets, plus an inside zipper that lets it expand to a full 8" in width. And, no matter how much you pack into the Scandia, it will still be trim enough to carry comfortably.

## It Wears Well . . .

As anyone who's ever owned a Scandia will testify, this bag lasts for years. Its high-quality canvas is water-resistant, color-fast, and scuff-proof. The heavy duty zippers, piping, and snaps are also well-made and very durable. And the Scandia will stay in style for years; its handsome, casual look goes as well with a business suit as it does with jeans and a sweater.

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Direct mail solicitations, which seek to raise money and spread the word, emphasize the dark conspiracy of the Secret Team. It's easy to package and offers a highly visible target for the institute's crusade. And there is obviously a receptive audience. As the Christic Institute says in a fund-raising letter, "Tens of thousands of Americans now recognize the Iran-*contra* scandal is only the tip of the iceberg." It then adds, "They are looking to the Christic Institute." Sheehan's organization appears as the investigator of last resort, the last hope of bringing the guilty to justice.

If anything like the Secret Team exists, the issue is the system that spawned it. Confronting the national security apparatus, though, is a tall order for a single public-interest group. "If we took on the entire C.I.A., where would we be?" asks Peter Dykstra, communications director for the Christic Institute. "Call it [the declaration] a minimalist position. But it's the only viable one."

Certainly, the viability of the Secret Team theory as a legal strategy will be settled in court. If it was adopted to achieve results, there will be no better measure of its effectiveness than a judge's or jury's decision. But courtrooms are not necessarily the best places to decide issues of history and political analysis. (That's exactly why the Christic Institute has adopted the RICO tactic.) That leaves the organization with the duty of demonstrating that its advocacy of the Secret Team theory outside the court is justified. If the Christic Institute has to depend on the second affidavit and similar material to do so, it will have a tough time. □

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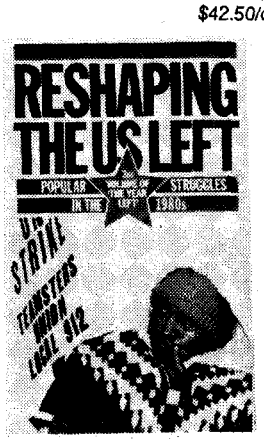


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# Constitution

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

National Endowment for the Humanities in honor of the anniversaries bear witness to that.

**The Jepsen Interregnum**

The Administration got off to a stumbling start, waiting two years to submit its nominees for twenty positions on the twenty-three-member panel authorized by Congress in September 1983 and naming in the interim the disgraced Roger Jepsen to be the commission's $70,500 a year executive director in January 1985. The former Iowa Senator, a Republican, happened to be looking for work at the time, following his defeat in a bid to be re-elected after disclosures of his visit to an Iowa health club that offered "nude encounters."

But the real problem with the new executive director—and his former legislative assistant, who was slated to fill an assistant post—was that the White House had no authority to make the appointments. Congress had reserved that right for the commission, which hadn't yet been named. The ensuing outcry from historians and others angered by Jepsen's overwhelming lack of qualification was followed by the Reagan loyalist's quick removal from his post and deposit in a no-profile sinecure at the National Credit Union Administration.

When President Reagan finally did appoint the commission on June 25, 1985, there was additional cause for alarm. Not one of the commissioners had a background in constitutional history. Many were Republican Party faithfuls and several were politicians, including hard-core ideologues like Senators Strom Thurmond and Representative Philip Crane. Other commissioners, too, had reputations as far-right cranks.

Perhaps most striking of these was Phyllis Schlafly, author of the hair-curling *A Choice Not an Echo* and head of the Eagle Forum, an antiabortion, anti-E.R.A. organization. Apparently Schlafly had asked the President to appoint her to the nonpartisan body Congress authorized.

The Rev. Edward Victor Hill, a member of the National Institute of Biblical Inerrancy, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and the Moral Majority, also seemed an unlikely choice. However, as head of the Black Clergy for Reagan Committee in 1980, he had brought a small but much-appreciated group into the California Governor's camp. Wayne County, Michigan, Executive William Lucas, a former Democrat with a penchant for unionbusting, fills out the commission's roster of black members. Lucas was fêted by President Reagan when he switched parties in 1985 and, according to Representative John Conyers, he "is to the right of Attila the Hun."

To the right of Lucas is former law professor Bernard

*Jamie Kitman is an attorney in New York City. Ruth Yodaiken is a freelance writer and an editor in educational publishing. Research assistance was provided by Beverly Burr and Jake Doherty.*

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Siegan, currently a judicial nominee for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. His stridently retrograde views on the Constitution and personal freedoms have been examined in these pages [see Herman Schwartz, "New Judicial Activists," *The Nation*, March 21, 1987].

Other commissioners are Republican Party regulars. Herbert Brownell was U.S. Attorney General under Eisenhower, from 1953 to 1957. Charles Wiggins is perhaps best remembered for his defense of Richard Nixon as a member of the House Judiciary Committee in 1973. Another commissioner, Ronald Walker, served as an assistant to Nixon from 1970 to 1973. In 1973, Walker was named director of the National Park Service. He resigned soon after taking office because of his role in a contract-letting scandal in which conflict of interest was alleged.

Commissioner Obert Tanner, a Salt Lake City jeweler and Utah G.O.P. bigwig, has raised vast sums for Reagan and Orrin Hatch, and commissioner Frederick Biebel served from 1981 to 1985 as deputy chair and White House liaison of the Republican National Committee. Edward Pierpont Morgan, son of J.P. Morgan, was a Republican Party stalwart and a member of the commission until his death in 1986.

Still other commissioners are Republicans of a more moderate hue, or mainstream Democrats. But in a misguided attempt to avoid embroiling the time-pressed commission in debilitating controversy, such Democratic commissioners as Senator Edward Kennedy, Representative Lindy Boggs and Thomas O'Connor, a Boston College history professor and Tip O'Neill associate, swiftly abdicated any potentially critical role. According to Kennedy aide Carolyn Osolinik, "The commission's not political at all. Everyone gets along very well."

Surprisingly well, you might say. One person in attendance at a party held for the commission by Obert Tanner at his Utah home following an August 22, 1987, meeting in Salt Lake City said of the gathering, "It was a regular lovefest out there. Kennedy was up on the dais toasting Hatch and Hatch was toasting Kennedy. You'd never have known these guys ever disagreed about anything."

The commissioners wanted an attention-grabbing kickoff to get the celebration rolling, but their first effort—a television broadcast on November 9, 1986, of the former Chief Justice joining several Disney characters in a funkless processional through Florida's Disney World on the occasion of the theme park's fifteenth anniversary—had failed to stir the imagination of the American people.

Realizing that the two years initially allotted for the celebration would not leave it time to accomplish its mission, the commission successfully lobbied Congress to extend the celebration another two years, through 1991, and to increase its fund-raising capability. Yet prospects for a meaningful bicentennial grow dimmer by the day. Under a four-year master plan the commission devised, its 1988 activities are to focus on the ratification of the Constitution by the states and the installation of the first Congress. Halfway through the year, the commission's primary activity in these areas has been to endorse a series of so-called ratification celebrations to be held in the signatory states. Merrill Lynch will underwrite 60 percent of the cost of the state tributes.

**The Chief**

When President Reagan named Warren Burger to chair the commission, it was at least partly in exchange for the jurist's agreement to retire from the Supreme Court early, making way for the ascension of William Rehnquist. Many who have worked with Burger report that he viewed the bicentennial as the crowning achievement of his life's work long before the legislation creating the commission was passed and even longer before he was appointed to head it. "He thinks he owns the bicentennial," one associate recalled.

Not unexpectedly, Burger brought to the task the same dictatorial management style that employees grew to hate at the Supreme Court. Described by former commission staff members as "an incompetent tyrant," he refuses to delegate decision-making responsibility for even the most trifling matters. He has ordered commission meetings closed to the public, a move that withstood a legal challenge by Public Citizen but hardly conveyed the freedom the commission purports to celebrate. Burger has reportedly decreed that commission staff should not speak to the press without his permission and has insisted that all major inquiries be directed to him through his communications office. (Spokespersons of the commission did not respond to our repeated requests to interview Burger, however.) The chairman has demonstrated supreme vanity in all things; careful observers will note for instance that a bust of Ben Franklin graces the August leaf of the commission's 1987 calendar, which was sculpted a long time ago by a young scout named Warren Burger.

In its unceasing deference to the former Chief Justice, the

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commission named Mark Cannon, Burger's Supreme Court administrative aide of thirteen years, to the staff director's post Jepsen had been forced to relinquish. According to commission minutes of August 22, 1985, the panel's search committee voted unanimously to approve Cannon after evaluating 175 other candidates, even though he "had neither applied for nor been interviewed for the job."

Cannon's presence in the powerful staff director's role has unquestionably cinched Burger's control over the daily operations of the commission. Together they have been able to regulate the flow of information to the commissioners, who meet infrequently (only sixteen times to date). According to one former employee, staff members drew up a four-year plan for the commissioners' consideration in 1986, containing several hundred proposed projects. By the time Burger presented the plan to the full commission for its examination, only fifteen remained.

A further display of Burger's unbridled egotism is his performance as the commission's self-appointed historian. Few of the employees on the commission's $3 million a year payroll have a background in the Constitution, and several sources we spoke with attributed this to Burger. Whatever the reason, the results have been unfortunate.

To grasp Burger's inadequacy, one need only reach for a copy of the commission's pocket-sized edition of the Constitution, 4.2 million copies of which have been distributed to date. In a one-page foreword, the onetime Chief Justice assembles a troubling number of factual errors:

> In the last quarter of the 18th century, there was no country in the world that governed with separated and divided powers providing checks and balances on the exercise of authority by those who governed. A first step toward such a result was taken with the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

That may have sounded appealing, but in fact most American revolutionists, along with Montesquieu and the eighteenth-century French philosophers, strongly believed that the British government operated under a system of checks and balances. The chief goes on to claim that "the work of 55 men at Philadelphia marked the beginning of the end of the concept of the divine right of kings." That probably would have been news to Oliver Cromwell.

Perhaps in recognition of Burger's limitations around the reading room, the commission staff began looking to hire a historian in 1987. By then, many scholars had written off the national celebration as folly. But several who were interviewed by the commission were astonished by some of the questions they were asked. One historian who met with staff director Cannon told us, "We spent the whole time talking about whether the framers of the Constitution were religious men. It's an interesting question, I suppose, but I thought it a little odd that that was all we discussed."

Other historians' experiences were even more revealing. "They asked me if I thought the Constitution was divinely inspired and I said I didn't think so," said one. "They said, 'You need to know that we here feel differently.' I said, 'How? Did the framers do it through prayer and inspiration or did God write the motions?' They said, 'All those things and more.' I understand that Mormons believe that stuff [both Cannon and his first assistant are Mormons]—but, really." An unmarried historian reported that his views on the family were closely scrutinized. "The question seemed to be whether or not I was gay."

**Racism in the Woodpile**

One staff member who would ultimately part ways with Burger and Cannon and resign from the commission was Ron Mann, the panel's first deputy staff director. Mann left a managerial job at Boeing to serve as a not-particularly-busy presidential personnel assistant before joining the commission staff in July 1985. He became the commission's first hire, at its first meeting, after he presented a multimedia depiction of a bicentennial celebration plan so elaborate that it contained architectural blueprints for a commemorative center to be built on the Washington Mall.

When asked why he departed so early, Mann explained that he and his wife wanted to be back in Seattle by September 1987 to open a daffodil and tulip farm. He failed to mention his role as a director of the National Center for Constitutional Studies (N.C.C.S.), a Mormon think tank whose texts *The Making of America* and companion *Study Guide and Bible Supplement* generated more unfavorable notice than the commission had bargained for when it hired him.

*The Making of America*, released in 1987 and edited by N.C.C.S. leader W. Cleon Skousen—a powerful Utah Republican with extensive ties to two political front groups of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, Causa and the Association for the Unity of Latin America—lists Mann as a contributor. The tome attracted national attention with its section on the Fifteenth Amendment, which refers to slaves as "pickaninnies" and states that "slaveowners were among the worst victims of the system" because they lived in constant fear of slave uprisings.

The reception for *The Making of America* was worst in California, where a state Bicentennial Commission appointed by Governor George Deukmejian was found peddling it as a fund-raiser. Some of the hubbub there may also have been connected with the media's simultaneous and not unrelated revelation that the head of the state commission had purchased a lifetime membership in the John Birch Society in the late 1950s.

**Tacking to the Right**

These revelations were ironic, because the commission has officially committed itself to avoiding controversy at every turn. Mindful of the vulgar Statue of Liberty centennial, for instance, it authorized the creation of a private foundation that would relieve it of the unseemly task of soliciting private funds for the bicentennial [see box, page 18].

Unlike the Statue of Liberty hucksters, the commissioners prefer not to spend money in support of projects undertaken to commemorate the bicentennial. A fraction of the approximately $46 million in budget authority it has received to date has gone to such programs, among them distributing pocket Constitutions and bicentennial calendars and pro-

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ducing a series of public-service television announcements, which aired briefly. (At least one of these—a TV spot on religious freedom—was never shown for fear that it might prove controversial.) Much of the commission's spending has been devoted to maintaining its comfortable offices in Washington and New York, and a staff of seventy-six full-time and twenty-eight part-time employees.

The commission's single largest grant was mandated by a 1985 act of Congress. The Center for Civic Education of Calabasas, California, will receive $2.7 million to design and coordinate a secondary-level curricular program on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, to culminate in national mock Congressional competitions. The establishment of the center, in 1981, presaged the 1985 act of Congress that would fund it—a coincidence that seems less miraculous when one considers that the center's national advisory board includes many of the politicians who have prominently associated themselves with the celebration, including several bicentennial commissioners.

One of the chief ways the commission helps promote and publicize bicentennial activities is by extending official letters of recognition. Projects the commission finds possessed of "exceptional merit" and "substantial educational and historical value" are allowed to use the commission's logo. Commercial ventures may also use the logo, with permission, in return for a certain percentage of gross profits given over as a licensing fee. The commission will also extend a letter of encouragement to a project that "demonstrates outstanding merit" but hasn't been fully funded.

In keeping with its play-it-safe policy, the commission resolved at its August 1, 1987, meeting to deny official recognition to projects "if any significant portion thereof appears to be advocacy of a particular point of view with respect to contemporary controversial, or political, or constitutional issues."

The proposal struck many as fanciful. To discuss an inherently controversial document without dealing with the many conflicts it spawned is very likely not to discuss it at all. But even more deplorable than the commission's resolution has been its repeated failure even to observe it.

One of the biggest winners of Federal support has been the Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy and its "journalistic arm," Public Research Syndicated (P.R.S.), which together have received more than $1 million from N.E.H., as well as the commission's endorsement. Affiliated with the Claremont Graduate School, the institute has produced worthwhile historical projects and symposia. But it has also turned out vulgar displays of gay-bashing, Red-baiting, racism and evangelical haranguing, which under both N.E.H. and commission guidelines ought to have disqualified it for support.

The March 1987 edition of *Proposition*, for instance, a monthly publication of P.R.S., leads off with a piece entitled "The Right to Be Queer: A Very Queer Right." Written by Claremont Professor Harry V. Jaffa, a director of the institute (along with Lewis Lehrman, a failed New York gubernatorial candidate and chair of the rightist Citizens for America, and Stephen Cambone, an analyst with the Los Alamos Nuclear Laboratory), it begins as a rational discussion of possible constitutional support for legalizing homosexual conduct, then quickly degenerates:

> We do not know . . . whether God did not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah by the plague of AIDS. The fire and brimstone may have been the aftermath, to extinguish the infection.
>
> What we do know, however, is that the God of the Bible—like Plato in his *Laws*—regarded sodomy as an abomination, and those who regarded it as an "alternative lifestyle" as unworthy to live.

Jaffa's was not an isolated display. The cover story of *Proposition* for June 1987 was titled "AIDS Testing Yes, 'Safe Sex Education' No."

By 1986, P.R.S. had received more than $481,000 from N.E.H. for its series, the "New Federalist Papers." With authors like Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d and topics like "Why Do We Have a Bill of Rights?" it is little wonder

## CONSTITUTION, INC.

The nonprofit Foundation for the Commemoration of the United States Constitution isn't remotely near its goal of raising $80 million by 1991, $20 million of which is to be directed to an endowment that will fund university fellowships in constitutional history. The foundation's three-person staff had difficulty raising its own bloated 1988 operating budget of $1.5 million.

According to executive director Robert Durkee, the foundation has been hindered by the fact that the commission is the sole body legislatively empowered to arrange licensing agreements for the use of its official "We the People" logo. Through May 31, the commission had raised just under $290,000 from these agreements, which provide that it will receive a percentage of the licensee's gross profits. As of last September 11, other donations had totaled a slim $235,000. Durkee thinks the foundation could do a better job: "The Commission has been hamstrung because they didn't want to appear too carnivorous. It's church and state over there. We here [at the foundation] are on the job to do the hard-nose fund-raising. We'd like to be able to offer the logo to companies we deal with."

Durkee credits the foundation with pulling off "A Celebration of Citizenship," the televised kickoff of the bicentennial last September 16. "We put that together with Nabisco and Xerox in a very short time," Durkee crowed. But what, I asked, about the commission's earlier kickoff, from Disney World in Florida? "In terms of tonnage, Disney World was the junior varsity kickoff, Philadelphia was the varsity kickoff," he explained.

Because the foundation is a permanent trust, it will be around long after the commission expires in 1991. "We were given a charge and charter by the commission," Durkee reminded me. "But we're independent. If we can survive to the end of the commission's tenure, then we can do it our way." —J.K.

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that contemporary politics creep into these essays, which are distributed free of charge to newspapers around the country. In 1982, P.R.S. received an N.E.H. grant of $21,700 for a series of "Bicentennial Commentaries," which included columns lambasting the American Civil Liberties Union and the Critical Legal Studies movement. Other syndicated pieces attacked Justice William Brennan and Rose Bird, former chief justice of the California Supreme Court.

Somehow, none of these indications of the institute's contemporary agenda made it into the application summary prepared for the commission by staff director Cannon. Recommending official recognition for the institute's six-year lecture series "Novus Ordo Seclorum: A New Order of the Ages," Cannon also did not see fit to mention a strident attack on affirmative action by Edward J. Erler that the project published in 1984, and another written by Erler that the institute reprinted in 1982, while Erler was an adjunct fellow. Or that, as director of N.E.H.'s Office of the Bicentennial in 1983-84, Erler was the very man responsible for awarding the Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy more than $700,000 in grant money, making it the single largest recipient of N.E.H. bicentennial funds in those years.

**The Con Man Cometh**

The most convincing nominee for the bicentennial *prix d'or* in the area of individual grantsmanship, freestyle category, can be none other than James McClellan of Cumberland, Virginia. A former aide to Senator Jesse Helms, McClellan is an outspoken opponent of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 who has lent new meaning to the phrase "con artist" by running a host of ultraright activities from the comfort of his own home—at government expense. In 1984 McClellan received a grant of $337,000 from the Legal Services Corporation to establish a Constitutional Law Center, an award that confounded those familiar with his many writings in favor of abolishing the government's legal aid program for the poor. Investigators for the General Accounting Office stepped in shortly thereafter, when McClellan launched from his home a campaign for a seat in the Virginia House of Delegates. Although he successfully eluded an indictment for misusing government funds, McClellan was forced to refund some of the moneys to the government and the center was closed forthwith.

In honor of the bicentennial, McClellan launched his latest brainchild, the Center for Judicial Studies (C.J.S.), and N.E.H. was quickly on hand with a $191,796 grant. C.J.S. publishes a bimonthly journal, *Benchmark*, that proposes to "fry activist judges and their half-baked doctrines." *Benchmark*'s pages are filled with homophobic and anti-affirmative action screeds grounded in the legal confabulations favored by astute Constitution watchers like Ed Meese. In fact, B. Nelson Ong's groundbreaking meditation, "James Madison on Constitutional Interpretation," which appeared in the periodical's Spring 1987 Bicentennial Issue, concludes that "in one sense Attorney General Meese represents the spirit of James Madison since they both seem to share the same approach to constitutional interpretation."


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According to the Burger commission, works like these deserved recognition for their "exceptional merit" and "substantial educational and historical value." Commissioners were no doubt also moved by the memory of C.J.S. executive director Dan Peterson, who arrived to testify before them at a September 1986 hearing in Annapolis, Maryland, carrying a bust of John Marshall, the first Chief Justice and Burger's avowed idol. Careful to angle the bust so it would make eye contact with Burger, Peterson invited the commissioners to "meet my friend, John Marshall." (One can, incidentally, purchase a copy of the bust from McClellan. It is made of a material "indistinguishable in weight, color and texture from solid marble." Cost? A mere $149.99, plus shipping and handling. Hurry, while supplies last.)

**God Is *Not* Dead**

Through grants to Claremont and C.J.S., N.E.H. and the commission lent comfort to adherents of the original-intent movement, the legal doctrine championed by commissioner Siegan and the Reagan Administration. As its name would suggest, the theory asks us not only to plumb the intentions of the Constitution's framers but to view those as precisely controlling modern constitutional interpretation. Aside from being difficult to apply (the framers didn't always consider issues clearly), rote application of the doctrine is foolhardy (the framers were often wrong, as in the cases of women's suffrage and slavery).

One group that has conspicuously hitched its star to the doctrine is the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy. Since its founding by a couple of conservative law students in 1982, it has received steady outpourings of Federal assistance and right-wing foundation money and has an annual budget that currently exceeds half a million dollars. The society has done much to build up the mass of turgid essays, somber law review articles and respectable symposia that a legal movement needs in order to move forward. Or, more precisely, backward.

Notwithstanding its many controversial views on aid to the poor, the rights of criminal defendants (in 1987 the Federalist Society awarded Attorney General Meese its first annual James Madison Award for Constitutional Jurisprudence), abortion, affirmative action, rent control and other contemporary issues, the bicentennial activities of the society earned it close to $150,000 from N.E.H. and the commission's highest accolades.

A recurrent theme of original-intent authors is the idea that the American nation born in 1787 was a divine creation, with a Constitution drawn by pious Christians to reflect the immutable principles of the Old and New Testaments. Typically, these authors document the religious convictions of the founders as an argument in support of prayer in public schools. Although this is plainly the sort of contemporary advocacy the commission purports to eschew, it has given its blessing to many such displays.

Decorum required that commissioner Phyllis Schlafly abstain when it came time for the commission to vote on the Eagle Forum's application for official recognition of its "We the People" slide program: The group listed her as its full-time project director. In a thirty-five-minute prepared script meant to be read with the slide show, Schlafly explained the Declaration of Independence:

> The Declaration founded our new nation on an entirely new principle—that individual rights, including life and liberty, come from God, our Creator, NOT from the state.
>
> . . .
>
> The Declaration of Independence has five references to God . . . [and] proclaims God's existence as a "self-evident" truth which requires no further discussion or debate. The Declaration is the religious and philosophical foundation of our American political system.

The commissioners duly found Schlafly's a project of "exceptional merit with regional, national or international significance," and "substantial educational and historical value in relation to the U.S. Constitution." Still, one wonders how the commission failed to discern the Eagle Forum's controversial or political dimension.

The commission's media guide and sourcebook also directs interested citizens to the National Association of Evangelicals' booklet "One Nation Under God." Here one learns, "History plainly reveals that this nation was founded on Biblical principles. Yet the paranoia over religion that grips the land threatens to bar that history from our public schools." The pamphlet offers additional proof of the founders' religious intent by recalling that at his inauguration in 1789, George Washington "electrified the hushed crowd by adding his own words: 'I swear, so help me God.'"


# THE JOHN REED CENTENARY

## A Tribute to the Author of *TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD*

Edited by Dr. Corliss Lamont

A historic book that includes the chief speeches made at meetings at Harvard University and New York City in celebration of the Reed Centenary of 1987. John Reed (1887-1920), Harvard Class of 1910, became a world-famous reporter and author. His book on the Communist Revolution of 1917 in Russia is the classic eyewitness account of that notable event.

The fifteen addresses and messages in this book published by the nonpartisan John Reed Centenary Committee go beyond Reed's radical views and activities to describe his exuberant, life-affirming character, his intellectual integrity and his cultural achievements, including a book of poetry. Reed's creative contributions deserve general admiration throughout America.

Send check or money order for $3, payable to John Reed Centenary Committee, to C. Lamont, 315 West 106 Street, New York, NY 10025.


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In another curious lapse from its stated policies, the commission followed the recommendation of a June 1986 memorandum by staff director Cannon urging it to grant blanket recognition to the bicentennial activities of the lily-white National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, which included in its application for official recognition fifty-one separate project proposals. The many thought-provoking projects outlined in the D.A.R. proposal include:

§ "Design a bon-bon dish"

§ "Concentrate on finding descendants of the signers"

§ "Explore possibility of participation in the Rose Bowl Parade"

§ "Assemble pamphlet with Constitution prayers recorded from 1786-1789"

§ A special printing of the D.A.R. Patriot's Index, a list of descendants of the signers of the Constitution.

"Note," Cannon wrote the commissioners, "that almost all of these projects involve either research, education or public ceremonies."

**Where Will the Money Go?**

Despite cries of poverty, money has never been a problem for the commission, which early on persuaded Congress to approve a 1,000 percent increase in the size of donations it can legally receive (it may now accept $250,000 from individuals and $1 million from corporations). It entered 1988 with $22.9 million on hand, and can expect more from Congress, the licensing of its logo and from its foundation. Now, over halfway through its term, the commission's real trouble is that it still hasn't figured out how to spend the money. (A persistent rumor has spread from the commission's offices to the Washington historical community: that the chief is building a war chest to erect a monument—à la Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials—to his hero, John Marshall.)

This is what worries many who've followed the commission to date. Although it has recently voted to direct an additional $1.5 million to teacher education programs, the commission has thus far declined to support many of the most significant scholarly projects under way. It has yet to fund any of the state or local bicentennial groups to whom it has delegated responsibility for developing the bulk of actual programming. And it has yet to win the attention—much less the understanding—of most of the American people. □

# EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 7*)

*contra* position at a radar station on a high hill about a mile from Siuna. In a subsequent interview with Cook, Major Sosa said the Sandinistas also bombed a *contra* position at the isolated arms depot about three miles outside town, and a *contra* position about a half-mile from the airstrip. He said they used cluster bombs in these attacks. The cluster bombs come in a large shell casing which, being far heavier than the cluster bombs themselves (it weighs about seventy pounds when empty), falls far short of the target. The shell looks like a bomb if not examined too closely. Reporters did see one of those near the airstrip, and it appears to be what LeMoyne thinks he saw.

"Mr. Bonilla also reported that the *contras* had taken Siuna." Not in his December 24 U.P.I. dispatch he didn't. Last week he reiterated to us that the *contras* never held Siuna.

"The head of the local hospital in Siuna, Dr. Klaus Helber," is quoted by LeMoyne as saying the *contras* "held the town for eight hours" and "visited" his hospital. Bonilla, present during the interview of Helber, could not confirm the former assertion and, as we shall see, threw startling light on the latter. LeMoyne also cites Dr. Helber in a manner suggesting that the guerrillas had not "purposely" wounded civilians. In his statement to *The Nation*, Dr. Helber writes: "1. The contra didn't occupy Siuna, they were briefly in control of some barrios for some hours. 2. Declaration: I'm not the director of the hospital. I'm the surgeon. 3. The contra controlled some barrios, but they didn't have the force to occupy the mining area and the military districts. 4. I mentioned that most of the civilians wounded were children and elderly people. I mentioned too that I'd to amputate [*sic*] more than 8 legs or arms within 2 days. . . . 5. I didn't know anything of the fact that the contra tortured civilians at the moment when Mr. LeMoyne asked me. But: (1) One day later I knew they murdered 7 civilians without arms [i.e., unarmed] in a shelter; (2) For example, it's no torture when a 6 year old girl loses 2 legs, mutilated for whole its life?" Dr. Helber makes further points about some disagreements with Bonilla's story in *La Prensa* and about the lack of *contra* support in the town, beyond "7 or 8 businessmen."

LeMoyne's bland statement that the *contras* "visited" the hospital is particularly instructive. In his dispatch, Bonilla wrote: "The West German doctor, Klaus Welber [*sic*], director of the local hospital, said that the *contras* had reached the door of the medical center in search of Sandinista soldiers 'to kill them,' but some nurses at the door, very nervous, denied that there were military patients in the hospital. 'Because I am an internationalist, I hid within the hospital for two hours, and we put the wounded soldiers in the attic to protect them.'" Bonilla went on at some length quoting Dr. Helber's account of the *contra* visit: "The nurses who received them were crying with fear. The *contras* said not to worry. 'We are not after civilians. We only want to kill the *piricuacos* [literally, "blood-crazed dogs"], the name the *contras* use for Sandinistas."

In his article LeMoyne wrote that Dr. Helber "said the rebels refrained from entering the hospital when asked not to, even though wounded Sandinistas were inside." He quoted *contras* as saying, "We don't want to hurt civilians. We know you are suffering hunger and we want to bring you liberty." This is an especially despicable instance of LeMoyne at work, and to bring out its wickedness requires word-by-word textual explication. Read casually, the passage quoted above implies that the *contras* knew wounded Sandinista soldiers were in the hospital but, even so, did not enter; whereas we know from Dr. Helber and Bonilla that they didn't enter because they'd been told that the soldiers weren't there. On the plane back to Managua, LeMoyne told Cook and Bill Gasperini of *In These Times* the same hospital story related by Bonilla, but distorted it for his dispatch to *The New York Times*. It would be one thing if LeMoyne had chosen not to believe Dr. Helber. It is quite another to misrepresent what he said, particularly when the doctor had charged the *contras* with coming to the hospital for the express purpose of committing war crimes.

So Dr. Helber directly contradicts what LeMoyne claims he said; Bonilla did not write what LeMoyne claims he wrote; and Bonilla's article shows how LeMoyne mangled Dr. Helber's account. There is nothing to suggest that the Sandinistas bombed the town and abundant eyewitness evidence to the contrary.

As reported in *The Nation*, the *contras* did not occupy Siuna. They mortared it from surrounding hills and entered two barrios on one side of town. Much of the mortaring was aimed at the two barrios, which hold nothing of military value. It was typically tendentious reporting for LeMoyne to say that the attack

(*Continued on Page 32*)

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# BOOKS & THE ARTS.

## Fiction and Fieldwork

ARNOLD KRUPAT

WATERLILY. *By Ella Cara Deloria. University of Nebraska Press. 244 pp. $19.95.*

After a trip to the Southwest in 1915 aroused her interest in Native American peoples of the area, Elsie Clews Parsons, a Columbia University Ph.D. in sociology, returned to her alma mater to study with the legendary founder of "scientific" anthropology in America, Franz Boas. Lecturing on anthropology at the newly established New School for Social Research in 1919, Parsons gained as her student Ruth Benedict, then in her early 30s. Parsons recommended Benedict to Boas, and after only three semesters of work, she received her doctorate in anthropology from Columbia in 1923. Benedict became an assistant to Boas at Barnard College, where, among other things, they taught Anthropology 3, "Introduction to Comparative Anthropology," and Anthropology 107, "Traditional Literature." In both those courses was a black woman from Florida who had formerly attended Howard University. This was Zora Neale Hurston. Hurston had already published some short fiction but, after studying with Benedict and Boas, she was persuaded to consider training as a professional anthropologist.

It was in 1928, the year of Hurston's graduation from Barnard, that Boas finally found the funds to bring a Native American, Ella Cara Deloria, to New York to collaborate with him in researching aspects of Dakota (Sioux) culture. Deloria, born on the Yankton Reservation in South Dakota, had studied first at Oberlin, then at Columbia Teachers College, from which she received a degree in 1915. It was in the spring of that year that Deloria had first worked with Boas and some of his students on Siouan materials. Back in New York, Deloria soon came under the influence of Ruth Benedict, who was to become a mentor and lifelong friend.

*Arnold Krupat teaches in the American Studies program at Sarah Lawrence College.*

One more strong anthropologist in the Boasian milieu needs to be mentioned, for Benedict, in these years, was directing the doctoral dissertation of Ruth Murray Underhill.

Each of these women, students of Boas, made contributions to American social science and to American literature in varying degrees. And each of them must have felt strongly the necessity to keep the two apart, for Boas insisted on the rigorous separation of scientific and creative endeavor. Perhaps it was the result of a certain residue of nineteenth-century positivism in his thought, perhaps more nearly the result of his own personality or temperament: In any case, Boas trained his students rigorously to maintain a distinction between "fact" and "interpretation," between the data themselves and theoretical speculation about the data. Fiction, of course, might be based upon fact and useful in its own right, but it had no claim to scientific authority—as science had no business with the figures and forms of fiction. Dennis Tedlock's recent description of ethnography as "that peculiar genre of fiction"—a description that today meets ready comprehension if not always agreement—would have baffled or certainly annoyed Boas.

Committed to art well before her introduction to formal anthropology, Hurston, we may suppose, probably suffered the most from the imposed separation of the interpretive/affective/personal and the factual/rational/objective. Much as she wished to please "Papa Franz," the "greatest anthropologist alive," her official major at Barnard was English, not anthropology; her greatest contribution to art, not science, although what there is of her ethnographic work has some of the texture and richness of fiction while her fiction is full of carefully observed ethnographic "data." In Ruth Benedict's case, we find early, meticulous accounts of the Zuni and Cochiti—but also verse published under the name Anne Singleton. Only with the breakthrough of her *Patterns of Culture* do we find, for better or for worse, ethnographic observation creatively—some would say even fantastically—deployed. And by this time, Anne Singleton and her poetry were largely abandoned. Even Elsie Clews Parsons, first in this line, detoured once from the strict path of science, as if agreeing with Paul Radin (one of Boas's earlier students) that "most ethnologists have realized that the lack of 'atmosphere' in their descriptions is a very serious . . . defect." In 1922, Parsons edited a volume called *American Indian Life*, for which she persuaded the most prominent anthropologists of the day, among them Boas himself, to compose brief fictional accounts (a unique endeavor on his part) of some aspect of the cultures they had studied. Parsons, identified in the table of contents not as a credentialed member of the academic and scientific community but, instead, as only a "member of the Hopi Tribe," wrote the Zuni entry herself. And Ruth Underhill, having published a scientifically proper Papago ethnography in 1939 (*Social Organization of Papago Indians*), followed it the next year with a novel about the same people, *Hawk Over Whirlpools*. Finally, there is Ella Deloria, who, after a great many years of scientific work detailing Dakota lifeways and language, came, sometime in the early 1940s, to work on the novel *Waterlily*. According to Raymond DeMallie, in his afterword to this Nebraska edition, it was Boas (in the last years of his life) and Benedict (the book is dedicated to her) who suggested that she attempt it.

It seems likely that Deloria had completed a first draft by 1944, for she sent it to Benedict, who suggested cuts in the manuscript to prepare it for the time "when the war is over and publishers are taking books that don't have to do with the war effort." Deloria probably did make the recommended cuts but, nonetheless, the book proved unacceptable to publishers. This is its first appearance.

*Waterlily* is, I suppose, an ethnographic novel. Its primary concern is to present the reader with a detailed sense of Dakota life in the earliest period of contact with the whites, with emphasis on the activities of Dakota women—rather than to present the reader with an original contribution to the novel as a form or genre. How, then, to judge the book fairly? One difficulty here is that we do not have, in English or in America, many ethnographic novels (as we do not have, for that matter, a very great

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many political novels). Underhill's *Hawk Over Whirlpools* is one, as is *Return to Laughter* (1954), by the anthropologist Laura Bohannan, published under the pseudonym Elenore Smith Bowen—a consequence, no doubt, of the continuing injunction to keep ethnography and fiction separate. But to call Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* an ethnographic novel would surely be to reduce its status and its claim to inclusion in the general canon of American literature. Nor would one comfortably classify the recent fiction of the Native American authors Louise Erdrich, N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko or James Welch as ethnographic novels. Their linguistic and formal ingenuity are simply too great for that.

All the same, ethnographic fictions have their own solid claims to interest, most particularly in their capacity to perform the function Sir Philip Sidney, in the late Renaissance, ascribed to poetry: that of teaching with delight. Unlike most of the ethnographic fiction we do have, *Waterlily* is by one who knows the culture from within, and in its instruction about Dakota ethnography the book strikes me (I am not an anthropologist) as wonderfully fine. Day to day life of the traditional Dakota is rendered in sympathetic detail to the point that it cannot be considered merely "exotic" or "strange." *Other* than modern Euro-American life it certainly was; but, in Deloria's sensitive rendering, their way, however different, was just as coherent, sophisticated and densely textured as is ours.

The book's structure is more or less that of the fictionalized biography, the story beginning with Waterlily's birth on one of her tribe's periodic removals from one campsite to another and ending with Waterlily herself as a wife and mother—rather a happy ending, all in all. In following Waterlily's life, we learn how Dakota women are courted and marry; how they give birth; how kinship rules between blood and adoptive relatives and relatives by marriage differ; how food is prepared; how children are reared; and how the tepee interior is divided—all of this, and, as they say, much, much more. Whites are occasionally spoken of, but, for the most part, as a curiosity. Only a few of the Dakota have yet actually seen them (I suspect this would place the narrative in the 1840s, although no dates are given). Dakota life, as Deloria presents it, has an idyllic quality to it—for all that people die in raids or from the smallpox contracted through contact with infected blankets picked up from the whites. There may certainly be an element of romanticization here. But, then, Deloria's aim is precisely to show a culture at the height of its power to manage the lives of its members satisfactorily, so why shouldn't Dakota life, as Waterlily experiences it, be quite a good life?

There are, as I have said, a great many textured scenes of everyday Dakota life. Let me single out the particularly fine attention Deloria pays to the complex and tender moments of marriage among the Dakota. There is, for instance, Waterlily's sensitive awareness of the (cultural) appropriateness of her attitude of reserve toward her first husband early in their marriage, together with a regret, after his death, that she had not been more forthcoming and open with this man who surely loved her. And there are descriptions of how a man might comb out his wife's hair, or a woman wipe and paint her husband's feet with ceremonial paint—both of these acts of intimate affection between couples married for some time. I think it worth remarking these details because the texture of relations between married people in traditional Indian cultures is not something that has often been made visible outside the pages of professional journals.

But this is just why the ethnographic novel will continue to have a future. We know now, to be sure, that art and science are not so separate as once they seemed; that even determining what counts as data is an act of interpretation. And no doubt we will soon see professional ethnographies presented in forms we could not previously have imagined. For all that, there is likely to remain a distance between what the specialists in or members of a culture know and what all the rest of us know—that distance is what permitted a measure of success to the infamous *Hanta Yo* of Ruth Beebe Hill and the *Seven Arrows* of Hyemeyohsts Storm. As a mediation between the specialist and all of us generalists, then, the ethnographic novel, if it is done carefully in the manner of Deloria's *Waterlily*, will have a function still to perform. It is good that the University of Nebraska Press has published the book at last, along with the sensitive and sympathetic accounts of Agnes Picotte and Raymond DeMallie, both of whom were close to Ella Deloria in her lifetime. □


# HYPOCRISY: AMERICA'S LEADING EXPORT

Under the cover of "making the world safe for democracy", the U.S. has countless Military interventions and covert operations directed at destabilizing sovereign nations and popularly supported governments. Washington, D.C.'s rhetoric about democratic rights is twice over a fraud. Its global exploits have more to do with propping up multinational corporate interests than with the export of democracy. And the U.S. record on democracy at home is abysmal.

The U.S. is ranked near the bottom of some 75 world-wide electoral democracies in voter participation. A maze of legislation and regulations restricts voter registration and impedes access to the ballot for insurgents and independents. A steady erosion of the fairness doctrine has led to monopolization of the media by heavily funded major party candidates. And genuine public debate on critical social and foreign policy issues is stifled by the lack of democratic process.

On the 200th anniversary of the ratification of the Constitution, American democracy is more than ever recognized as a myth. But there is something you can do to make it a reality. You can support the fastest growing grassroots citizens lobby in the country — the **Rainbow Lobby** — which is developing a portfolio of legislation and issues to guarantee the civil and democratic rights of all Americans.

To join the **Rainbow Lobby**, fill out the coupon below and send it with a contribution of $25, $50, $100 or more. Your contribution can really make a difference. **Volunteers also needed.**

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# Radical Collages

HANK LAZER

You will not find the poems of "language poets" in *The American Poetry Review*, *The New Yorker* or *Poetry*; you will seldom see their work reviewed there or in *The New York Times*; nor will many of them be offered teaching positions or readings through the M.F.A. industry and the associated writing programs. But for over twenty years, in magazines such as *Joglars* (1964-65), *Tottel's* (1971-81), *This* (1971 to the present) and *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* (1978-81), the language poets have been building a poetry network outside the universities and official verse culture. By now, this movement (based principally in New York City and in the San Francisco bay area) has given us a body of writing that may be the most significant in American poetry since the modernists. Readers unfamiliar with language writing will, in all probability, initially read this new poetry with frustration and anger. But this discomfort, a common reaction to new art generally, is analogous to the antagonism to the poetry of John Ashbery fifteen years ago or to the writings of Eliot and Pound earlier in the century. Language writing too calls for new reading skills.

Following upon the most adventurous work of Gertrude Stein, Louis Zukofsky, William Carlos Williams and Jack Spicer, language writing can be seen as an oppositional literary practice that questions many of the assumptions of mainstream poetry. Instead of considering poetry as a staging ground for the creation and expression of an "authentic" voice and personality, language poetry arises out of an "exploded self," blurs genre boundaries (not only the boundary between poetry and prose but also the ones between poet and critic, between poetry and criticism) and seeks actively collaborative relationships between reader and writer. If there is a central assumption in language writing, it is that language is experience-engendering, rather than that the writer's task is to find language to re-present experiences that, somehow, exist outside of or prior to language.

*Hank Lazer's essays have appeared in* Virginia Quarterly, Southern Review, Boundary 2 *and elsewhere.*

Language writing challenges American poets to be something other than ornaments to the national culture and to resist what Laura Riding once called "the forced professionalization of poetry." In *The New Sentence*, a collection of essays, Ron Silliman reminds us,

## IN THIS REVIEW

THE NEW SENTENCE. *By Ron Silliman. Roof Books. 209 pp. Paper $10.*

LIT. *By Ron Silliman. Potes & Poets Press. 70 pp. Paper $7.50.*

ARTIFICE OF ABSORPTION. *By Charles Bernstein. Singing Horse Press. 71 pp. Paper $5.*

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FURTHER READING

IN THE AMERICAN TREE. *Edited by Ron Silliman. National Poetry Foundation. 628 pp. $45. Paper $18.95.*

"LANGUAGE" POETRIES. *Edited by Douglas Messerli. New Directions. 192 pp. $21.95. Paper $8.95.*

DISTRIBUTION

The Segue Foundation, 303 East Eighth Street, New York, NY 10009.

Small Press Distribution Inc., 1814 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94702.

Sun & Moon Press, P.O. Box 481170, Los Angeles, CA 90048-9377.

"Poetry is part of a larger, oppositional strategy and cannot be viewed as an end in itself." His contribution to language writing and to our particular moment in literary history is to fuse the aesthetic and the political:

> The problem of poetry at the end of the 20th century is who shall write it, not in the sense of which persons, but rather persons *of what order*? How will they be constituted, understand their own "individuality," and relate this to such audiences as each attempts to construct? Such questions are both literary and social.

Silliman, who worked for a number of years in the California prison movement and is currently the executive editor of *Socialist Review*, argues that

> the primary ideological message of poetry lies not in its explicit content, political though that may be, but in the *attitude toward reception* it demands of the reader. It is this "attitude toward information," which is carried forward by the recipient.

For Silliman, "poetics must be concerned with the process by which writing is organized politically into literature," and "there can be no such thing as a formal problem in poetry which is not a social one as well."

Silliman, who has published thirteen books of poetry, has been at work on a massive project called The Alphabet since 1980. He has completed seventeen of The Alphabet's twenty-six books, of which *Lit* (for the letter "L") is the twelfth. *Lit* typifies Silliman's structuralist work: The book consists of twelve sections, each with a formal relationship to the number twelve. The guiding structural concept for *Lit* is stated in section eight, from Thoreau's *Journal*: "Let there be as many distinct plants as the soil and the light can sustain."

In spite of its careful constructions, *Lit* feels neither rigid nor constrained. Silliman's writing is fun to read: Its pleasure lies in the gradual unfolding of intricate forms and in the mix of puns, declarations, sounds and sights from our daily environment, the range of references from philosophy to baseball. In the course of *Lit*, we encounter an outrageous array of sentences: "History leads to the t-shirt"; "Between language and thought/stands a cop"; "A minor leaguer to be named Later"; "I don't intend to homogenize my meaning for the sake of an enemy"; "The shadow of Stein crosses the text." As with the repetition and modulation of basic rhythm and melodies in the minimalist music of Philip Glass and Steve Reich, key words and sentences echo throughout *Lit*, providing a pleasing familiarity and recurrence. Silliman's humor partakes of the exuberant, deflating coolness of the postmodern, whether he is parodying the proverbial—"Nature abhors a dachshund"—or parodying the moderns: "I

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know a house of mud and wattles made (no I don't)"; "Tamed by Milton, I lie on Mother's head"; "make it noise"; and "The antennae of the race have been snapped off by idle youth."

Silliman, who never graduated from college but who, by the time he was 21, had had poems accepted by *Poetry*, *Chicago Review*, *Southern Review*, *Tri-Quarterly* and others, can employ a conventionally lyrical style—"India my Indiana, say that particulars do not fade nor rust consumed in their own dust, or that memory's fair, an old funeral barely the scene of thought's return"—but the display of a lyrical bauble is not his goal. Instead, he immerses us in a welter of details, dictions, awarenesses and perspectives, as in the fifth paragraph of the final section of *Lit*:

> The yard understood as a mixture of motives, porch paint spotting sage and spider, sawdust and old boards killing the lawn, strange bird half yodels in the plum tree against the sound of a garden hose inside a trash can or another bird's higher trill, ears absorb while the eye scans, skin senses the fog's damp, butt upon the step, sound of a broom in which driveway, wind felt in eyebrow's hair, here in the little things (who I am), three flies articulate the sky between porch & tree, poetry is that this thought thus, body but a metaphor (who I was) for a medical model of that thing lit. Of late much work, little light, leads humor stuttering home, get the lead out (of the pencil, the penis), the point scratching paper's skin seen to signify mind means the made marks the maker's mask (meet science), ear stitched to side of head, hard wood weds floor to foot (I am not that), float from word to word as if there were a reason, as if there were reason, beyond *as* and *es*. "Ease awes," guffaws the talking mule, eyes as corrective to ear's reduction of kitten's seductive vocabulary turned to "mews" is snot enough to lose amid typos the essence of our text beckoning assent. Anxiety of response conducts meaning to lowest denominator, prefaces foreplay plying tongue to punctuation, a setup. "My reputation is in your mouth" is in your mind (read aloud) allows no reading. Speak up or forever hold your piece: this is the place. Word bytes man, and the apple drops. Submit to reading. Now read this. And this. This. This.

This paragraph exemplifies the poet's ongoing attempt to make the moment of composition part of the text, as well as some of the ways in which his text engages our own reading of it. Here it is "point scratching paper's skin"; midway in the book, "A/young Asian man wearing thick glasses watches me write this through the window of the laundromat where/two small boys circle the washers, playing tag"; near the book's end, "activity grounded in its own proceeding, bleeding store-bought ink onto spongy page."

There is a distinctly utopian strain to Silliman's writing, perhaps because "the writer cannot organize her desires for writing without some vision of the world toward which one hopes to work, and without having some concept of how literature might participate in such a future." Silliman's writing inspires us precisely because of its kind of labor: "Among the several social functions of poetry is that of posing a model of unalienated work: it stands in relation to the rest of society both as utopian possibility and constant reminder of just how bad things are."

In contrast to Silliman's poetry of the declarative sentence, Charles Bernstein's writing presents greater initial stylistic difficulties, in part because it blurs the boundaries between poetry and philosophy. *The Sophist*, his most recent collection of poetry, attempts to undo the damage that has accumulated since Western culture absorbed Plato's fear of poetry. Silliman describes Bernstein's stance as one that enables him "to 'liberate' philosophy from its context of professional pedantry by preferring the decentralized, economic marginality of poetry as the discourse through which to proceed." In *Artifice of Absorption*, a book-length essay on poetics written in the form of a poem, Bernstein declares his "insistence/that poetry be understood as epistemological/inquiry." Like Silliman, he attacks the narrowness of official verse culture, which Bernstein claims has for the past twenty-five years "engaged in militant/(that is to say ungenerously uniformitarian)/campaigns to 'restrict the subversive,/independent-of-things nature of language'/ in the name of the common voice, clarity, sincerity,/or directness of the poem." Through an oppositional and transgressive poetic practice, Bernstein wishes to end the "monotonizing of experience" which comes from a plot-centered insistence on the sole legitimacy of "clear writing."

*The Sophist*, a 177-page collection of thirty-six poems written over a ten-year period, is Bernstein's most important book of poetry to date. As the title sug-

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gests, the book affirms poetry as a form of philosophical inquiry and acknowledges the place of rhetoric as primary in producing thought and meaning. Paradoxically, the book is unified by a principle of difference: Each poem differs radically (in style and layout) from the previous one. Throughout his career, Bernstein has worked scrupulously to achieve a poetry that resists the staple of the M.F.A. industry's version of poetic craft: the achievement of a distinct voice. This is not to say that Bernstein is incapable of writing beautifully lyrical lines of poetry, as in the concluding lines to "The Voyage of Life":

> We
> Carve and so are carved in twofold swiftness
> Of manifold: the simple act of speak-
> Ing, having heard, of crossing, having creased.
> Sow not, lest reap, and choke on blooming things:
> Innovation is Satan's toy, a train
> That rails to semblance, place of memory's
> Loss. Or tossed in tune, emboss with gloss in-
> Signias of air.

Bernstein can sound the register of late nineteenth-century impressionism, as in "From Lines of Swinburne"; "As a voice in a vision that's vanished/Perjured dark and barer accusation/Song of a pole congealed/Whose soul a mark lost in the whirling snow." But he serves up lines that, while they have the sound and rhythm of familiar form, withdraw from a fixed content or subject. Unlike Ashbery, who finally does settle upon a recognizable, laconic, bemused voice, Bernstein gives enough space to so many vocabularies and rhetorics that no one style or position can possibly emerge as comprehensive. His forte as a poet may prove to be a form of radical collage, with a new rapidity and elusiveness. Often, as in Silliman's poetry in prose, he stitches fabric together at the level of the sentence, as in "Surface Reflectance":

> Debby had just about tied the bow of her pink taffeta dress when she heard the porch door creak open. "At least when I close my eyes nobody can see me." Early warning sighs. Buttressing broncho-dilation, arcadian microseconds jostling pansynchronic obsidian vases in the collation of infrequent mention.

In "Amblyopia" various typefaces reinforce the multiple planes of discourse:

> *Blessed are the grieved* for they at least have seen their inheritance; the rest wait in maxivans to collect as available. THE BITTER COKE OF JIMMY CARTER; the greased palm, the adored swan; all are crepuscular, dilated, dogged, dictated.

Bernstein states quite clearly the kind of writing and thinking that do not interest him: "Each limb flows gracefully into/the next, with the effortlessness of good thinking."

Bernstein's recent work, both in *Artifice of Absorption* and *The Sophist*, makes it clear that, while a master ironist (in Kierkegaard's sense of irony as a withdrawal of content), he is, like Silliman, a poet given to affirmation and to a distinctly utopian vision. His affirmative view stems from his critique of the supposed opposition between thought and emotion. In "The Only Utopia Is in a Now," Bernstein ridicules the assumptions of much mainstream poetry, particularly the aversion to so-called abstract thinking:

> "On this block," the voice was steady now and almost seemed to sing, "what is called 'thinking' is absolutely forbidden in the name of what is called 'emotion.' You're only supposed to write and say what everyone else knows, and to write and say it in the way everyone else has already heard it. In fact, they issue a manual, *Acceptable Words and Word Combinations* and everyone talks and writes only in permutations derived from this book."

But Bernstein's guiding premise is that "emotion doesn't express itself only in words we already know." He reverses polarities on his mainstream opponents: "The people here are so ideologically pro-emotion they make it into an abstract concept that is more theoretical than the intellectuality they renounce." In an exhortation to all language-users to embrace experimentation and discovery, to resist and question standardizations of expression and use, the poem concludes, "Don't be afraid, gentle writers, gentle speakers, that you won't communicate or will be too intellectual. Only when such concerns fall away, like calluses from our tongues, and we are left just to do and be, not trying to communicate out of a fear of being unable to, will language take its rightful place as love." For Bernstein new forms of written expression affirm our common birthright as language-users, able to question and make the meanings and truths by which we situate and construct ourselves in this world.

The writings of the language poets, and especially recent work by Silliman and Bernstein, offer us an accomplished poetry as a revived medium for thought and pleasure. Yet, the dismissal and suppression of language writing make pertinent Gertrude Stein's observations in her 1926 lecture "Composition as Explanation," where she laments the slow acceptance of new methods of composition:

> and it is very much too bad, it is so very much more exciting and satisfactory for everybody if one can have contemporaries, if all one's contemporaries could be one's contemporaries.

For indeed the language poets present some of the finest expressions of our worthy contemporaries. □


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# Modern Romancers

JULIE ABRAHAM

NO MAN'S LAND: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century. Volume 1: The War of the Words. *By Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar. Yale University Press. 320 pp. $22.95.*

Feminist literary criticism can still be a marginal enterprise in an intellectual universe that also contains William Bennett, Allan Bloom and Gertrude Himmelfarb. But in the almost twenty years since Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* helped to inaugurate the field, feminist criticism has also prospered: It now has its own establishment, its own mainstream and margins.

One of the key works in the process of consolidation was Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's 1979 study, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination.* They synthesized a decade of feminist analyses and applied the result to the recognized nineteenth-century stars -- Jane Austen, the Brontës, George Eliot and Emily Dickinson -- while also rewriting Harold Bloom's account of literary history as a father-son contest to incorporate struggles between fathers and daughters. This established their penchant for the large formulation, their position within the feminist critical establishment and their role as purveyors of feminist critical assumptions beyond its ranks. All these elements were confirmed by their editorship of the 1985 *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, itself a major commercial sign of the impact of feminist criticism on the teaching of literature in the United States.

Gilbert and Gubar present their latest effort, *The War of the Words*, as the theoretical introduction to a three-volume successor to the *Madwoman*, titled *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century.* This work will be completed by two volumes of close textual readings, one due later this year and the other in 1989. Their subtitle, with its implication that there is such a character as "the woman writer," indicates in advance that they still aspire to the definitive statement on a grand scale, to the repeat achievement of a critical if not a popular blockbuster.

While mainstream critics of twentieth-century literature are still responding to the challenge of feminist criticism by adding Virginia Woolf but talking about E.M. Forster, in *The War of the Words* Gilbert and Gubar have brought forward a host of women writers who don't even make it to the footnotes of *The Pound Era.* They have produced an eminently readable study just when academic criticism is courting the abstruse in order to reassure itself of its own significance. They talk about novels, stories, poems and plays instead of other critics and critical works. They use "minor" and shorter works to make major points, marshaling their sources in bulk -- there are no revolutionary theories based on one novel by Balzac, or *Great Expectations* and a Conrad novella. And they frequently bypass the conventional designations of period and style that often, for example, inhibit serious discussions of the realists writing when modernism was in flower.

But, in order perhaps to insure accessibility, they have chosen to tell us a story, a narrative history of twentieth-century literature they begin as far back as 1848, with the Brontës, and bring up to 1987. And, in order perhaps to deal with the range of the material they are covering, they have chosen the most traditional story for women, the only story women were supposed to figure in before the experiments of twentieth-century literature, a story of their relations to men. Gilbert and Gubar "conflate and collate" the lives and works of individual male and female writers to create "one possible metastory, a story of stories about gender strife," a "history of [hetero]sexual battle." These writers are divided into couples as well as camps: "James and Wharton, Yeats and Lady Gregory, Hemingway and Stein, Lawrence and Mansfield (or H.D.), Wells and West (or Richardson), Eliot and Woolf, Graves and Riding, Miller and Nin." The terms change over the course of the story, for example from "stern Victorian husbands and their maddened wives" to "turn-of-the-century misogynists and rebellious suffragists," and later "mid-century he-men and ambitious independent women." At different times different sides claim victory: "At the height of the modernist era . . . both sexes by and large agreed that women were winning, while postmodernist male and female writers, working in the 1940s and 1950s, reimagined masculine victory." But the women writers and their works are continually placed in literary history in terms of their relation to male writers and their works. Our heroines cannot be seen to contemplate any other aspect of their existence. Gilbert and Gubar have in effect given us a nineteenth-century novel about twentieth-century women's writing.

Although they argue that the major change that occurred in literary history in the course of the shift into the twentieth century was that women writers could now have literary foremothers as well as fathers, they attempt to explain the relations between the new generations of women writers in terms of a version of Freud's "family romance." Women writers are described as "oscillating between" literary mother and father figures, and so female or male peers, in a schema in which women's relations to each other are always still mediated by a father figure, so that Gilbert and Gubar can maintain their heterosexual focus.

The history of Anglo-American literary criticism also becomes part of the battle. In their chapter on "Tradition and the Female Talent," the authors discuss the politics of literary criticism and in particular of canon formation, suggesting that

> the emergence of modern male literary discourse, exemplified by theoretical and canon-forming works like "Tradition and the Individual Talent," *The ABC of Reading* (1934), *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), and *The Well-Wrought Urn* (1947), can be seen as an attempt to construct *his* story of a literary history in which women play no part.

Even contemporary Lacanian revisions of Freud and "French Feminist theory" can be absorbed into this motif. Jacques Lacan becomes a descendant of Tennyson, Gilbert and Sullivan, Eliot and Pound, incorporated into the discussion of male misogyny and attacks on women's writing. Meanwhile, the writings of the proponents of "écriture féminine" are merged with those of some 1970s U.S. feminists and retrospectively placed in a line of resistance that goes back to Virginia Woolf.

But the battle of the sexes seems an odd narrative framework to choose when one of the distinctive characteristics of twentieth-century women's writing, as Rachel Blau DuPlessis has argued, is its challenge of the male-female romance plot. Virginia Woolf observed in 1927:

> We long sometimes to escape from the incessant, the remorseless analysis of falling into love and falling out of love,

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> of what Tom feels for Judith and Judith does or does not altogether feel for Tom. We long for some more impersonal relationship. We long for ideas, for dreams, for imaginations, for poetry.

Exchanging individual stories for a "metastory," or love for hostility, does not diminish Gilbert and Gubar's familiar emphasis on Tom and Judith. Their record of conflict between the sexes emphasizes male-female differences, obscuring a history of literary experimentation with gender boundaries and stereotypes that they themselves have discussed in earlier essays. It also neutralizes and contains the unprecedented literary presence of lesbians and gay men. Lesbian writers, editors and patrons – including Woolf, Sylvia Beach, Margaret Anderson, May Sarton – were responsible not only for much of the writing Gilbert and Gubar discuss but also for the publication and promotion of works by straight and gay women and men, from Marianne Moore's first book of poetry to James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Also, during the first part of this century, the "lesbian" functioned as the sign of the modern, in the work of writers as disparate as D.H. Lawrence and Radclyffe Hall, Proust and F. Scott Fitzgerald. As Gertrude Stein declared, "I so naturally had my part in killing the nineteenth century and killing it dead," and she was not referring to the lessons she gave Hemingway.

What Gilbert and Gubar's battle of the sexes does, however, is insure that their account of twentieth-century women's writing is firmly anchored to mainstream histories of twentieth-century literature and the assumptions on which those histories are based. The *War of the Words*' discussion of "modernism" reveals the limits this imposes. Gilbert and Gubar use the term in two different ways. In part it serves as a historical marker for literature produced after the turn of the century and during the interwar period. At the same time, they discuss modernism in more familiar terms as a specific "high culture" phenomenon. Gilbert and Gubar argue that this modernism must be seen as a response to the threatening "rise of the female imagination" as well as to such already recognized nineteenth- and early twentieth-century crises as "the industrial revolution . . . the fall of God" and the Great War. But their argument depends on upholding (even though now self-consciously) the traditional delineation of literary modernism as the product of Eliot, Pound and Joyce, "a men's club," as they observe. They cannot pursue the possibility that modernism was also created by the female imaginations of Woolf, Stein, Dorothy Richardson or Djuna Barnes. They cannot ask what "modernism" was or might have been.

Similarly, despite their charges about the politics of canon formation and their own violations of convention in attempting to include women at all, Gilbert and Gubar do not question the principle of the canon. In their preface they ask simply, "What exactly *is* the canon of twentieth-century literature by women, given that increasing numbers of women have entered the literary marketplace in the last one hundred years and that so many reputations are still in flux?"

Based on the principle of hierarchy implicit in the idea of the canon, their efforts to be inclusive are inevitably constrained. As they work to develop a women's canon parallel to the men's, they incorporate examples of the work of women writers from a "black tradition" or a "science fiction tradition" – Ann Petry, James Tiptree Jr. (Alice B. Sheldon). But these appear as amplifications of arguments based on an implicit mainstream – white, heterosexual women who produce contemporary realist or experimental work. Meanwhile, false parallels are constructed by the designation of black, science fiction or lesbian traditions as subsets within a canon of twentieth-century women's writing. There are obviously greater differences than similarities in the relations of black, lesbian or science fiction writers to their particular "traditions." The historical experiences such traditions refer to are widely divergent, and the relation of the writing in question to any more conventionally canonical culture varies greatly.

Waving their standard in the battle of the sexes, Gilbert and Gubar have produced the kind of feminist work that looks most threatening. They rework the terrain of male writers' hostility to women that Kate Millett established, some old favorites making a reappearance beside new entrants to the lists: D.H. Lawrence's phallic politics, Hemingway's lament for Francis Macomber, and Mailer's Rojack, for example, are now accompanied by stories by Henry James and Aldous Huxley, poems by Thomas Hardy, Robert Lowell, Ted Hughes, and T.S. Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes* proposing, "Any man has to, needs to, wants to/ Once in a lifetime, do a girl in." But the woman reviewing male abuse of women is, after all, the feminist of conventional literary and political imagination. This feminism is paradoxically much easier to assimilate than more complex feminisms with other concerns. Gilbert and Gubar have taken their overall title, *No Man's Land*, from the language of World War I trench warfare – battles in which both armies were male. "No man's land" was a place where, if there were no men, there was no one. This seems to be the anxiety at the center of their new work, but some feminist criticism has moved beyond the need to define "the place of the woman writer" in a male territory in order to insure that someone is really there. If Gilbert and Gubar's approach is the result of a desire to mainstream feminist concerns, *The War of the Words*, in its reduction of both the complexities of its subject and of feminist perspectives, provides an object lesson in the dangers of that goal.

But it seems that Gilbert and Gubar's relation to feminism in *The War of the Words* is rather nervous overall. Feminist scholarship in the 1980s has included a range of attempts to place the contemporary women's movement in its historical context. Gilbert and Gubar also attempt to contextualize second-wave feminism, but do so in a cultural balancing act that pairs feminism with "masculinism" and "misandry" with "misogyny," regardless of the differing values of those terms. Feminism becomes one result of the "sex antagonism" they record. Their balance between "masculinist" and "feminist" is established in the service of ideals of "aesthetic excellence," "great literature," "effective works of art" and "creativity," which are explicitly distanced from "doctrinaire politics" and "ideology," leaving Gilbert and Gubar on the side of "great literature" and superior to "ideology." This looks like an attempt to locate themselves above and beyond a history in which feminists struggle and, as feminism tells us, ideology is inescapable. It points us back in the direction of the "great tradition" that feminist critics began by challenging.

In *The War of the Words*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar present mainstream literary criticism with a wealth of material it prefers to ignore and a new version of an old story. But so far, *No Man's Land* feels like retrenchment practiced on material that demands daring. Is this postfeminist criticism, and if so, can we afford it? □

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# Yak(but)nopatawpha

ART WINSLOW

LETOURNEAU'S USED AUTO PARTS. *By Carolyn Chute. Ticknor & Fields. 244 pp. $16.95.*

In school in Maine, a friend liked to talk about potting deer from his back porch as they fed in the orchard behind his house. Asked about the legality of taking more than one, or of doing it both in and out of season, he replied, "Warden knows better than to come onto our land." He was from Blue Hill, and although not given to such boasting, Carolyn Chute's account of the rifle-butt beating of warden Cole Deveau in *The Beans of Egypt, Maine* lent him an authority I had been unwilling to.

Chute's first novel was justly praised—she is a primitivist writer, a sort of Grandma Moses in print, except where folk art plays on the myth of goodness inherent in everyday scenes, Chute holds up savagery, the near-killing of the warden a case in point. Blackberry bushes do not sway gently in a breeze, they "claw up the side" of a trailer's metal walls; a wedding ring is a "brutish silver band with hearts slashed into it"; a woman tells her ex that it isn't the good old days, he should "go maul [his] new sweetie pie"; a solitary uncle sums up people as "ratty messed-up back-stabbin' sons-a-whores"; a rape scene involving protagonists who later cohabitate is interspliced with anecdotes of maulings by black bears. Seemingly random pairings, the limited pool of partners, incest close enough to render the first-cousin question silly, violence both familial and bestial: This is the land beyond the streetlights, where the four fenders don't match, mufflers and dentists are luxuries, health insurance is reporting for work because the only coverage is a day's pay, and women work the third shift. Welcome to Maine, "Vacationland."

With hardly a lobster in narrative sight—this is the Maine woods, not the coastal corridor frequented by the dockside crowd—Chute has set out to show that man will not only endure, he will prevail, to borrow from Faulkner, with whom she was perhaps inevitably compared when *The Beans* appeared. *Letourneau's Used Auto Parts* is drawn from the same well as her earlier novel, a bucketful of characters, some of whom get thrown out by the landlord and pregnant by a stepfather, kill animals en masse, wander in and out of lucidity, couple and uncouple with near-ethereal ease, kill themselves, dodge the deputy, and more or less hope, as one puts it, "It's gotta be SOMEWHERES. . . . That you get immune . . . Right?"

But immunity from pain, particularly the sandpapery feel of their own ignorance and station, which abrades Chute's characters at every turn, is hardly on the novelist's mind. The impediments are sometimes simple here—a stuck ring, a broken-down truck—but they are crippling nonetheless, for any agency of help sits on the far side of suspicion or a cash register. Hence the primitivist sense that inhabits Chute's writing: We are pitifully small, the world—even the family next door, the village down the road—appallingly big and incomprehensible, sometimes rendered less so by a pentecostal Christianity in place of animism, or punched back for its immense uncaring by acts of self-destruction both violent and submissive.

This lay of the land is apparent from the outset of *The Beans*. Earlene Pomerleau, narrator of much of the novel and a small fry at its opening, lives across a right of way from a Bean trailer and spends her days watching a BIG BEAN WOMAN and BIG BEAN BABIES who play amid boxes of truck parts, awed by their size and number. The sign on Earlene's side of the right of way reads, "NO TURNING IN DRIVEWAY!!!! KEEP OUT!!!!" The Beans' sign, painted on a metal drum in their yard, spells out "WORMS AND CRAWLERS." The emotional locus of the novel, responsible for much of its weight, hinges on a simple question: Can this girl avoid that fate? Her father and occasional bedmate is engaged in a constant harangue to keep Earlene on her side of the great divide and the Beans on theirs. The losing battle, as it turns out, provides what many find to be the poignancy of the story line.

The mother lode Chute tapped into—the sink-or-swim at the poverty line nexus of setting, character, story, prose and mood—is mined further in *Letourneau's Used Auto Parts*. And it is refreshing to read once again about people who drink from jelly glasses, wear old thermal underwear for shirts, have a curtain for a bathroom door and a red fur cover on that room's principal fixture: people who tend to be seen as the muck squeezing up around the rest of us now and then.

The cast of characters is different this time out—less criminal, mostly—but we are still in the town of Egypt. Beans make cameo appearances, a requirement of locale rather than anything else, one senses, and yes, it does appear Chute is out to create a Northern correlative of you-know-whose county in Dixie, complete with maps and genealogies. In comparison, you'd never know who won the war: Defeat, it seems, springs eternal. But then, so does Big Lucien Letourneau, whose scions, former wives and other kin are the principal characters of *Letourneau's Used Auto Parts*, along with E. Blackstone Babbidge and the equally bountiful fruit of his loins.

Big Lucien Letourneau runs a junkyard employing many of the book's characters, and also a trailer park housing many of the town's would-be homeless, free of charge. This latter enterprise is named Miracle City, a place where everyone seems to end up—appropriately, for Big Lucien is a trope for God throughout the book, the benevolent but absent father, creating and sustaining again and again, and we come to know him the same way we know or disavow the Almighty in life: through inference.

The entire book is spent anticipating, albeit weakly, a peek at Big Lucien, through innumerable references to his "heart of gold" and the fact that "everything is dear in his eyes." Through the report of his gentle counsel to stop a trigger-happy killer who's after such public enemies as yellow grosbeaks. Through his own death-dealing, unseen but not unremarked: "It was just a mattera time. . . . How far-reaching the golden hand of Big Lucien Letourneau is," one character muses. Through the emissary from the secular, the code man, a yuppie bad guy out to shut down Miracle City for zoning violations, constantly nosing around but never finding Big Lucien.

This sleight of character is only a minor element of *Letourneau's Used Auto Parts*—unfortunately, for if the truth be told about Chute's two novels, it must be said that *The Beans* is the Siamese twin that lived.

Chute works by piling up vignettes, effective in *The Beans* largely because

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of the time-lapse look at Earlene's life and the grittiness of her first-person narration. In particular, Earlene's little-girl disgust for all things Bean provides the blade on which the reader twists, given the book's denouement. Lacking such a structural and emotive shiv, the vignettes of *Letourneau's Used Auto Parts* come off as merely scattershot, the heartfelt quality of *The Beans* lost in the woods.

This is not to say that pieces of this literary quiltwork are not fascinating, but far too many read as if they're filling the space before the next square rather than contributing to any cumulative effect. Babbidge, for instance, will throw his arm across his eyes to sleep in a crowded, lit trailer, a mannerism not so expressive of character that it bears comment again and again or should shoulder so much of the writer's and reader's investment in him. And such examples abound.

With little opportunity to know any one of the gaggle of characters in *Letourneau's Used Auto Parts* intimately, pleasure must be taken elsewhere. The primitive cast given the world and its inhabitants, Chute's métier, is as raw as ever in her language, one consolation: When lilacs in her dooryard bloom, the novelist has the twisty, tree-sized things "put off a smell"; the protein on the dinner table is nothing other than "fast meat"; one character's sexual passion "is hardly distinguishable from his familiar and constant rage," while another, who wed a pregnant woman and forces her to rip her blouse open after the ceremony, proud to own new property, jabs her belly and says, "Finders keepers."

In the end, *Letourneau's Used Auto Parts* leaves one scavenging for pithy sections much as the workers in Big Lucien's junkyard scour the rows of wrecks for usable parts and the occasional items found in trunks. You might fare better, but they found a Moontrekker model that buzzes and flashes, a Rubik's cube and a deer-foot lamp. □

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# MUSIC.

## GENE SANTORO

### The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival

As it does each spring, New Orleans recently celebrated its musical heritage in a carnival-style bash, the nineteenth annual Jazz & Heritage Festival. Started as a showcase for local Louisiana and Delta musicians with a strong emphasis on Cajun, Creole, down-home blues and gospel, the festival now welcomes music of nearly every stripe as it fills the New Orleans Fair Grounds, various workshops in town and a riverboat for floating nightly concerts.

Vestiges of the festival's local origins remain, while some of the more recent additions—Caribbean and African sounds, for instance—mark a healthy attempt to survey the rich confluence of musical styles that have moved in and out of this area over the last century and more. But there are less healthy developments too, including the increasing prominence of outside headline acts of doubtful musical value like Kenny G, Michael Brecker and Robert Cray. Although they are booked for the big stages and the lucrative riverboat shows, these groups are, at best, tenuously connected with the Crescent City's musical heritage, vast as it is.

Despite these changes in its musical emphasis, the festival still offers a lot of music at a relatively low price (as long as you avoid the generally skip-able riverboat concerts on the President, which run $25 a pop). For a $9 ticket, you can spend a day moving from event to event on the fairgrounds. In the tents and on the smaller stages the offerings are organized thematically. The bigger stages are more haphazardly booked and more obviously devoted to drawing the estimated 300,000-plus tourists whose $40 million is so crucial to the depressed New Orleans economy. The various Mardi Gras Indian tribes periodically winding around the fairgrounds' center keep the atmosphere relaxed and local so you can focus on New Orleans events like the vocals of the Neville Brothers' overlooked sibling, Charmaine—she's got a voice like a whipsaw and a stage presence like a loaded gun, and she's not at all shy about using them on the audience.

But with the notable exception of Charmaine's male relatives, the President's stage hosted no locals. The Friday night opening of the festival, for instance, offered the highly touted Stevie Ray Vaughan's Valium blues headlining over B.B. King and Albert Collins. Touches like this along with the ever-present multinational logos of sponsors like Burger King, A.T.&T., Miller and Coke are unhappy reminders that the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival is not an independent regional fest anymore but part of a network of festivals operated by jazz entrepreneur George Wein.

Wein has been working the festival circuit since the early days of Newport, when he capitalized upon the site's name by inviting the tobacco people to sponsor the event. (Hence the odd course that found the Newport Jazz Festival being staged in New York for years without ever changing its name—it was the sponsor's cigarette, not the venue, that mattered.) That corporate logos have become commonplace at concerts only shows that Wein was ahead of his time in using corporate funds to save himself from shouldering all the promotional risks with his own capital. The broad effects of this alliance are several. To start with, the tastes of big business generally run in safe channels: Companies invest in this stuff for the P.R. value and they want to impress the maximum number of consumers with their generosity. That means steering a middlebrow course through the treacherous waters of art. In the world of jazz the festivals sponsored by various behemoths and run by George Wein feature *Billboard* names like Gerald Albright, Spyro Gyra and Wynton Marsalis, or nostalgia merchants like Ella Fitzgerald and George Shearing. Think of it as a Las Vegas road show for jazz.

One wrinkle peculiar to New Orleans in the Wein skein is that the festival is a nonprofit enterprise. It was set up as nonprofit in order to funnel proceeds into a scholarship/grants system for local musicians, which seems like a good idea until you discover that a surplus has been reported only once, and that was for $100,000. So aside from the publicity value—and the tourist dollars—it's a bit hard to see what's in it for the locals whose festival it used to be.

Still, once you get away from the heavy hand of George Wein there are local pleasures in the various tents. Of these, the Gospel Tent was the most stir-

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ring and down-home. "Gospel isn't dead, is it?" asked the chunky black female emcee between the fast-paced twenty-minute sets that hurtled along day in, day out. Local no-names like the Soulful Heavenly Stars strutted uptempo shouts while the Famous Fairfield Four wove their soaring, rich harmonies through their jubilees. The Desire Community Gospel Choir boasted a leader with the drive and charisma of a James Brown: Confronting an audience of passive spectators at the close of their first number, he roared: "You make me feel like I'm not singing. If the Lord done something for you, do something about it. I'm wearing my white concert robes, and you're not gonna rob me. You just comin' in outta the rain." He succeeded in whipping up a revival-like frenzy, especially when he duplicated a James Brown set-closer, complete with cape routine and a fall to his knees.

Along with the Gospel Tent, the Travel New Orleans Lagniappe Tent and the Spirit of Louisiana Stage maintained links with the festival's heritage. Here were some truly local sounds: country blues by Lazy Lester, Moses Rascoe and Little Freddie King; street-singer antics by the outrageous Snooks Eaglin; bayou backcountry stylings by Sid Selvidge, Dennis McGee, Bois Sec with Canray and his French Band, Dewey Balfa and Friends. A lot of this music's rough-hewn, easygoing charm derives from its front-porch quality—an illusion even the more polished performers easily maintain, partly because they're not outsized stars, and partly because the nature of Louisiana's music, like most Afro-Caribbean styles, is so social.

The stage called Congo Square represented a decent attempt to illustrate some of the links between New Orleans and the Caribbean by hosting an engaging, generally outstanding set of international performers. Tabou Combo of Haiti floated their pop-hybrid zouk, the Mallick Folk Performers of Trinidad unleashed calypso, Sugar Minott of Jamaica dug into reggae and Willie Colon of Puerto Rico fired off salsa.

If the Gospel Tent and Congo Square were consistently gripping, other sites were always to be avoided. The A.T.&T. Economy Hall relentlessly offered whatever it is tourists are supposed to think Dixieland is. Maybe it's enough to say that whenever I wandered by it, I thought whoever was struggling onstage should get somebody *really* sharp, like Al Hirt or Pete Fountain. Or take the Uncle Ben's Rice Jazz Tent: If you think jazz means pianist Henry Butler stumbling through his assortment of borrowed moves and then launching the unreliable warble he uses for a voice, Uncle Ben's was a great place to hang out.

Unlike many of the tents, the big outdoor stages had no set themes—unless hosting big-name performers can be considered a theme. Showtime, which had a mobile crew covering the festival for a still-unannounced TV airing in much-edited form, shot only these two stages, and a look at the lineup tells you why: Dave Brubeck, Albert Collins, Cissy Houston, B.B. King, The Mighty Sparrow, James Brown, Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, Asleep at the Wheel, Al Green, Maria Muldaur, Los Lobos, Little Feat.

This is not to say there were no regional acts on these stages. Local mainstay Tommy Ridgeley and his band did a generally fine set; and if Ernie K-Doe led off with his oldie hit "Mother-in-Law," well, that was kind of endearing. Beausoleil, who are a bit too folkie for my tastes, acquitted themselves well with their Cajun string-band revivalism, while Rockin Dopsie's set went down the tubes immediately after he announced that Paul Simon (who used his band for one cut on *Graceland*) would be joining him onstage, and Simon didn't oblige. Soul queen Irma Thomas, who was scheduled to close the first Sunday, was fired even beyond her usual glorious incandescence by James Brown's childishly egotistical tantrums about his not being able to close the show: He held thousands up in the blazing sun while he diddled around on- and offstage for an hour. So when Irma hit the stage, she blew everyone away.

Certainly some of the imported acts—Brown, Green, Sparrow, Little Feat—fit because of their musical styles and roots and put on terrific shows. Once Brown got over his tantrums he smoked. Green sang "Let's Stay Together" for the first time I can remember since his becoming a preacher, and was utterly amazing, tossing himself into the audience twice—to the security guards' utter dismay. Ballard proved he's no r&b oldies act but a sharp-creased performer who can really put out on his past glories. Sparrow's soaring vocals and rocking calypso grooves heated the audience up to near sunstroke. And if Los Lobos and Little Feat proved that almost anybody can paint their music by the numbers, well, maybe that comes with the

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territory they're working these days.

The fact is that when there's so much talent floating around the Crescent City and environs, the only possible excuse for peopling the big stages with folks like Los Lobos and Maria Muldaur is their alleged value as tourist draws. There's nothing inherently wrong with that: If these acts are spaced carefully throughout the weekend, lesser-known performers from the region can benefit by being introduced to a whole new audience. No doubt at least some of that happened this year, but its dangers as a strategy are clear from George Wein's work in other places: The JVC Festival in New York, for instance, is so devoid of either ideas or jazz that I'm skipping it entirely this year to go to the Knitting Factory Jazz Festival (47 E. Houston St.; June 15-July 6; phone number 212-219-3055). The Knitting Factory is doing what Wein should be doing—presenting local and national talent together with the hope of exposing them to a wider audience than they could draw individually.

But where does that leave the local New Orleans players whose festival Wein now runs? Still in it, though in a diminished way. More to the point, perhaps, it leaves them in the streets and the clubs, especially the clubs in black neighborhoods. Places like the Glass House, where, instead of their excellent Dixieland for tourists, the Rebirth Jazz Band pumped out heavy funk to careening dancers' delight; like Snug Harbor, where Aaron Neville did his golden-voiced doo-wop solo routine; like tiny Tipitina's, where the Neville Brothers test-drove the fabulous, uplifting set that closed out the festival on May 1 to an outdoor audience of thousands; like Muddy Waters, like the Maple Leaf Bar, like Jimmy's and everywhere else that allows the music to be what it's meant to be—a continuous part of life. □

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# EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 21*)

"was seriously marred" by civilian casualties such as Kenia Rodríguez. LeMoyne calls the mortaring "poorly controlled"; residents call it indiscriminate. And though LeMoyne insinuates as much, Dr. Helber, speaking of the nature of the civilian wounds, says, "I didn't express that this is a common occurrence in guerrilla attacks, but the result of the criminal attacks of the contra." LeMoyne takes it as a matter of pride that he mentioned the case of Kenia Rodríguez, but he could scarcely have ignored a little girl on a stretcher with her feet blown off. He seems to have had no interest in more deliberate atrocities. Lying next to Kenia in Puerto Cabezas awaiting evacuation to Managua was a young Nicaraguan doctor who volunteered the fact that the *contras* had shot up the ambulance in which he was riding, dragged him, another doctor and an already badly injured patient from the ambulance; shot them; and left them for dead. The other doctor and the patient later died. Mark Cook, who spoke to the doctor at the time, has since substantiated his story in interviews with local people.

The military targets LeMoyne lists as having been hit are not in Siuna, and the main such target in the town, the army headquarters, went unscathed. Of the "hill" upon which it is situated, Cook says, "A child could bicycle up it without difficulty," and Bonilla says it is "not very well defended." In Bonanza, which LeMoyne says was "reportedly" held by the *contras* for two days, the list of installations destroyed included only a police post and a militia office and, once again, not the army headquarters.

Even LeMoyne does not argue that the mining towns of Siuna, Bonanza and Rosita are themselves bases of *contra* support (the surrounding area is sparsely inhabited). The Siuna population strongly resisted attack. The *contras* claim to have put 7,000 troops into the combined assaults, and the government claims to have held them off with 360 troops, two-thirds of whom were civilian militia and part-time reservists. If LeMoyne's experience of Nicaragua extended beyond *contra*-organized day trips along the border or hops through Managua, he would know that more than half the rural population round Siuna has elected to join peasant co-ops, the main targets of *contra* attacks.

As regards LeMoyne's charges of brevity and circumscription of journalistic inquiry afforded by the Sandinistas, Cook says that the journalists had agreed in advance to visit only one town because of time constraints. Bonilla, whom LeMoyne calls upon to "attest" to his version of events, instead confirms Cook's account. Despite LeMoyne's remarks about a "Sandinista-guided tour," reporters—as his own movements indicate—were free to go where they wanted and were provided with pick-up trucks. He asks whether he should have "lied" and said it was "just a 'propagandistic' raid," rather than "the biggest and most militarily successful attack by the rebels." In my column I never disputed such a proposition, and indeed was delighted to accept it, since if such unparalleled success involved an attack on Siuna that failed to damage the electrical plant, the mine, a row of heavy-duty Renault trucks parked in front of the airstrip, the airport itself and the military headquarters, then the true scale of such success was amply demonstrated.

My quarrel with LeMoyne was precisely that he failed to set such "success" in perspective and, as it turns out, presented his "evidence" to produce exactly the coverage of a "propagandistic" raid that the *contras* were looking for. In clinical terms he was an important part of the *contra* raid and did his job more ably than the footsoldiers wildly mortaring the barrios. He knew what the *contras* wanted. As Edgar Chamorro writes in his book *Packaging the Contras*, LeMoyne once told him, "The contra leaders won't invite you on trips, won't take you into their camps, and won't talk to you, if your articles are too critical." As always, the fundamental absurdity lies in LeMoyne's pretensions to objectivity and disinterested observation, in presumed contrast to Sandinista dupes being led around by the nose. Had inhabitants of Siuna had the opportunity to know LeMoyne and his work, they could have said as he approached: "Your newspaper supports aid to the *contras*, and you have been writing articles glorifying their might. Why should we trust you to tell the truth?" They would have been right.

A final note about Kenia Rodríguez. Mark Cook writes, "When I met her while she was waiting to be evacuated she apparently did not know that her feet had been amputated. A couple of days later she was hysterically begging Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega not to let the doctors cut off her feet. When Contadora deputy foreign ministers and a delegation of Nicaraguan children visited her a few days later she was crying inconsolably and could not turn her head from the wall to greet them. She is psychologically somewhat better now and is getting artificial limbs, but these will have to be adjusted or replaced every few months until she is fully grown." It is unlikely that any of the money voted by the U.S. Congress for war-maimed Nicaraguan children will help Kenia, since A.I.D., which is disbursing the funds, has ruled that no money is to go through official Nicaraguan channels, and most Nicaraguan hospitals are run by the Ministry of Health. Nicaragua has a workshop, the Hospital de Rehabilitación Aldo Chavarría, set up with International Red Cross assistance to manufacture artificial limbs. The Nicaraguan Medical/Material Aid Campaign in New York can channel assistance to that project.

*Alexander Cockburn*

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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2203

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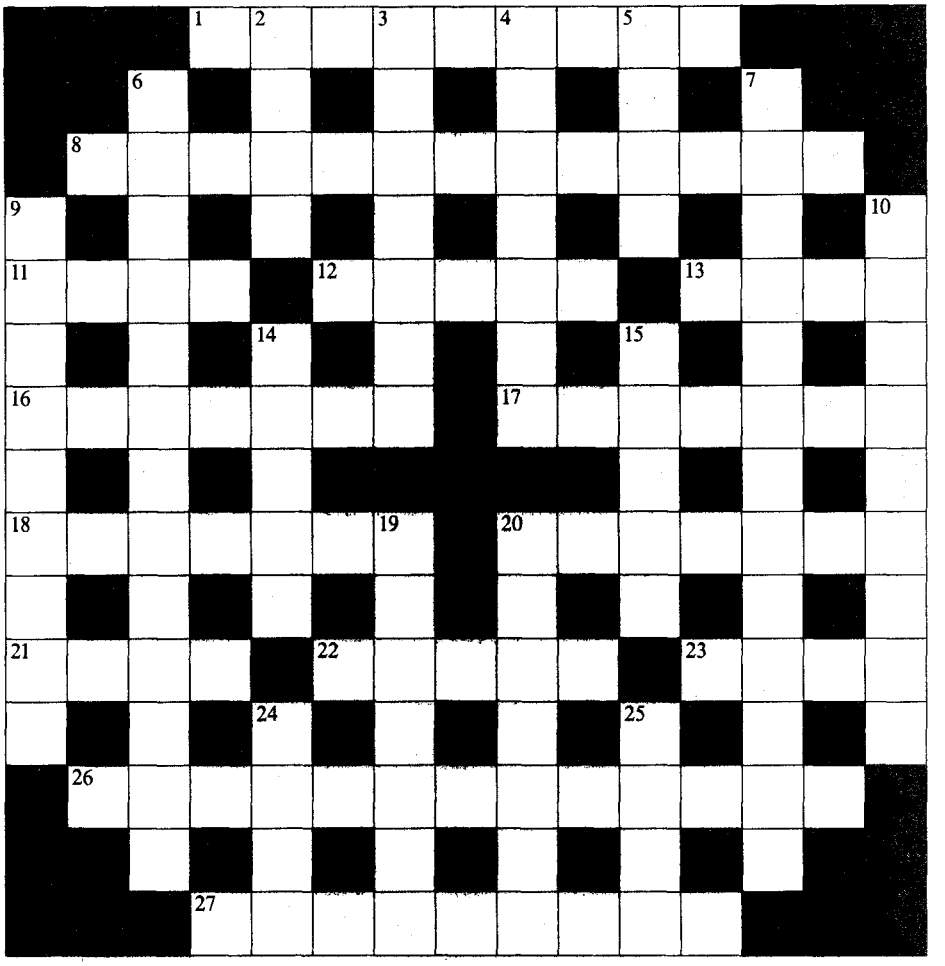
X-523

# Crossword Puzzle No. 2204

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 What a deer hunter used to enjoy implies one can look back on it. (9)
8 Do people come up to scratch periodically with it? (5-4,4)
11 Tea with a companion? (4)
12 They find the 22 somewhat attractive. (5)
13 Transportation coming back from the shop? (4)
16 Two animals or one—with eggs going up to a dollar! (7)
17 Repeaters rechose this, perhaps. (7)
18 Sometimes a fair place in Germany, with Bach playing the organ here. (7)
20 A murder has to be solved to find one essential to the hearing. (7)
21 An unpopular "gate," though I went along quickly with it. (4)
22 It might be thrown for you to see, but it's not heavy. (5)
23 In time this might be associated with the unknown writer. (4)
26 To make a serious mistake smacks (as they say) of old-fashioned killers. (13)
27 A young girl and I have a duet composed to describe our more langorous moments. (9)

DOWN

2 One with Caesar's law is also the holly. (4)
3 Lacking freshness, cut things short and find a place for a crafty clean-up operation. (7)
4 A common Russian farming implement might be considered novel. (7)
5 Proving a somewhat dated musical might grow on you. (4)
6 On a stormy sea, the slight nervous disorder has an associate, in a manner which might be quite artistic. (13)
7 Perhaps a bad mark allowed with the sprinter, but it could be a plant . . . (7,6)
9 . . . and everything is surrounding a contrary girl in the garden, too. (9)
10 The morning application fits people to a tee, which should be entertaining. (9)
14 A caterpillar probably is, but such things are not crystal clear. (5)
15 Off the back, it's reputedly a generous gift. (5)
19 A tiger's obviously wild, reaching a little way up on the lower limbs. (7)
20 Show off, perhaps. (7)
24 Does it prove that in India a small price is enough for a girl? (4)
25 Tails taken off 27 make the sort which would not be new. (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

**PUZZLED?**

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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# TIME TO DISSOCIATE FROM ISRAELI POLICIES

**This statement has already been endorsed by over 500 American Jews including Professors at 73 Universities**

We are Americans and Jews and we come together at this time publicly to express our strong desire to see the United States take meaningful steps to dissociate our country from the policies of Israel.

For some years we have witnessed Israel increasingly deviating from political policies that we find acceptable and from moral values that we hold dear. These developments are not the responsibility of any particular political party in Israel but rather stem, in our judgement, from a tragically misguided approach toward the Arab world in which Israel is located, a racialist ideology and a growing militancy. We can no longer condone or be associated with such Israeli behavior, nor, do we believe, should our country.

In recent years Israel has twisted away from basic commitments made at Camp David in 1978; annexed further territories, including East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, while continuing to expand settlements in all the occupied territories; and grotesquely invaded Lebanon, resulting in the death of tens of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians as well as hundreds of Israelis and Americans, and the taking as hostages of others.

Furthermore, Israeli policies and attitudes toward the Palestinian people have made it evident that only major changes in Israel's basic posture will allow for a peaceful political settlement with the Palestinians.

Israeli complicity in Irangate and Contragate coupled with Israel's employment of American Jews as spies against our country further underscore the growing dangers inherent in the current U.S.-Israeli relationship. The close identification in the public mind between Israel and Jews – an equation vigorously fostered by both the Zionist movement and the American Jewish lobby, which has come under its control – threatens to stigmatize Jews everywhere.

The recent acts of killings, beatings, curfews, expulsions and house arrests – all against unarmed Palestinians living in areas Israel has occupied for 20 years – further demonstrate that Israel has become a badly divided country with many unfortunate similarities to the situation that prevails in South Africa.

Our ancestors came to the United States because, as a result of their Jewishness, they were discriminated against and abused. The European experience culminated in the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust. How tragic that in our own time the very State established by Jews in the aftermath of this evil has become a place where racialism, religious discrimination, militarism and injustice prevail; and that Israel itself has become a pariah state within the world community. Events taking place today are all too reminiscent of the pogroms from which our own forefathers fled two and three generations ago – but this time those in authority are Jews and the victims are Moslem and Christian Palestinians.

We believe that Israel's course could not be maintained but for the continuing financial, political, military and covert support of the U.S. government. And we fear that unless firm steps of disengagement from Israel are taken now our country might get dragged into a major war for which preparations are under way.

In addition, we believe that unless the United States takes serious steps to distance itself from Israel the Israelis will mistakenly continue to think that the course they are on is acceptable to the American people.

For all these reasons we believe the time has come to ***normalize*** the U.S. relationship with Israel. A complete re-evaluation of what has become since 1967 the American sponsorship of Israel is required. The unprecedented amounts of economic aid should be cut back over the next two to three years to much smaller levels. Furthermore, the considerable military and intelligence assistance should also be radically reduced.

Unfortunately, during the years of the Reagan Administration much the opposite course has been followed, and Israel has practically become a ward of the United States. In this election year we urge an open debate about the serious problems and dangers which have resulted from the current structure of U.S.-Israeli relations. Few foreign policy issues are of such importance to our country. Consequently we urge our leading politicians to resist the widespread inhibitions from speaking up about Israel, inhibitions which result from the severe financial, political and ideological pressures often brought to bear against those who do.

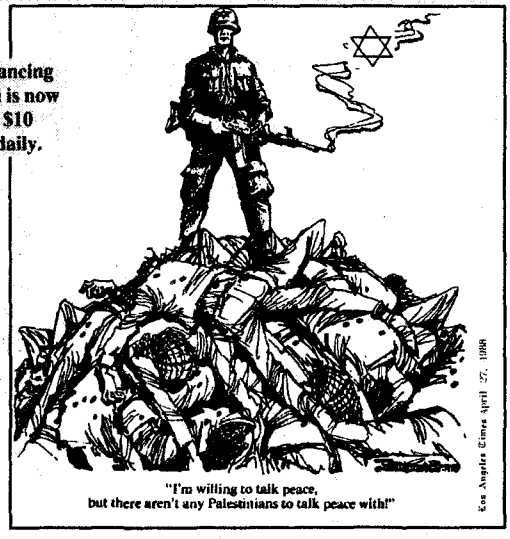
We further believe that the time is overdue for negotiations between the Israeli government and the PLO, which is quite clearly the chosen representative for the great majority of Palestinians – negotiations that should quickly lead to a Palestinian state in the occupied territories and reasonable security guarantees for all parties. In the security guarantees we think our country should participate; but no longer in the financing and supporting of the kinds of policies Israel has been pursuing. The continual oppression and denial of Palestinians of their right to self-determination is an injustice which has become intolerable not only to those demonstrating for their freedom in Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza and throughout Israel itself.

The citizens of Israel, of course, will ultimately choose their own country's destiny. But at the very least the citizens of the United States should stop financing and supporting policies that are contrary to the principles and values we hold precious as Americans and Jews.

## We are Americans & Jews — Please Join Us

**We support reducing aid to Israel**
**We support the Palestinian "Intifada" for a Palestinian State**
**We support open discussion of these vital issues**

**U.S. Financing for Israel is now nearly $10 million daily.**



"I'm willing to talk peace, but there aren't any Palestinians to talk peace with!"

*"The daily conflict is not an event anymore, it's part of the landscape. It is 'the new Israel'."*
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